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EASTER DAY
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SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

Easter Day

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	COL. III. 1-7.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XX. 1-10.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	EXOD. XII. 1-29.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	EXOD. XII. 29, OR EXOD. XIV.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	REV. I. 10-19.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	S. JOHN XX. 11-19, OR REV. V.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Lesson of Christ's Suffering.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 COR. XV. 22.

WE have followed Jesus through His sufferings and into His silent tomb, and this glorious Easter morning, even before we came to listen to it in church, we began to tell ourselves the story of His Resurrection almost before we were awake; the thought of the empty tomb, the waiting angels, the puzzled women came to us with a blessed realisation of what it was all so soon to mean to them and to us. The sun united with our souls to bring us joy, while to those of us who faithfully follow Jesus through the gloom and trial of Good Friday, every ray that shines, every breeze that blows, every flower that blossoms tells of the Resurrection of Jesus, and of the joy that comes with the news of a risen Christ. We are keeping in our Church to-day, as the Church has kept for so many centuries, as the disciples kept it in Jerusalem, the anniversary of the Resurrection.

There is one special thing about the anniversary. It seems always to connect those who were present at the event which the anniversary commemorates with those who remember and celebrate it to-day. It connects the first men and the last men, and all the generations of men and women in between, in one unbroken chain, and, where the event celebrated is such as the Resurrection of our Lord, to bind them to the eternal throne of God. There is this, then, about our anniversary, it annihilates time, and binds together the new and the old. We cannot enter upon the joys of our Easter morning without thinking much of those first companions of Jesus. The disciples, who, while they fled from Him in trial, yet waited in love mixed with despair near to His tomb, and came slowly, with puzzled faces and doubting steps, into the revelation of their risen Master. To SS. Peter and James and John, we are very close to-day, and indeed, we repeat much of their experience as we come so slowly, so doubtfully, some of us, into the wonderful revelation of our immediate and eternal life begun in Jesus Christ.

It seems to me that on this day we can hardly give our first thought to ourselves and to the benefits the Resurrection of Jesus has brought to our Christian life. It would be strange and quite too egotistical if we could so soon pass from the great lesson the Church has put before us these last days in the suffering Saviour, and His personal battle with the powers of sin and death, to think first of all of our own part in His death and Resurrection. We must come to this soon, and thank Him with all the joy of our hearts, all the service of natures ransomed by His sacrifice for the deliverance of our souls, for our personal joy in His Resurrection. But I call upon you first of all—you who have through love truly sympathised with the agony of Thursday night, with the pain and agony and bitter death struggle of Good Friday, the battle with sin and its apparent failure as Jesus bowed His sacred head upon the Cross of ignominy—to try and share, as far as you can, the feelings of Jesus Himself, as, coming back through the gloom and failure of the tomb, He rises on Easter morning from the dead. He regains His body, and finds it the same but glorified, and realises His triumph over sin and death, and finds in His victory the assurance of the victory of righteousness for ever, and of the salvation of the precious souls of the men for whom His fight was fought.

And now, what can we gain by this Easter morning—how apply its blessed teaching of immortality to the life we now live? The immortality of the soul—simply to go on for ever and for ever doing the things, thinking the thoughts, being the men we do and think and are—is that all that the Resurrection of Jesus brings to us? Surely not; surely it would mean little to some of us if it were only that we were to go on for ever doing the little things whose very monotony wearies us to-day.

COMPLETE SERMON

A little thing indeed it would have been to the disciples, this Resurrection of their Lord, if it had simply meant for them that they were to go on for ever and for ever about the streets of Jerusalem, and the hills of Judea, doing always over and over again the little daily things that they had so often done already. If no new life, no enlargement of nature, no opening of their intercourse with Jesus into fuller and deeper communion were possible, then was this gift of immortality a small thing to them. The Resurrection of Jesus brought to them the gift of eternal life. It was not that they were to do the same things for ever that they had done before, but that they were to be new men, and live new lives in Jesus their risen Lord, who opened for them, by His Resurrection, an entrance into the life of God, which must deepen into eternity, because He in whom it was to be lived was eternal, and in whom they were united with Jesus in a blessed immortality. And what can this conviction of our immortality do for us in the elevation of the lives we are living here in the flesh to-day?

I. In the first place, I think it must surely increase our faith in the dignity, the nobility of life. It seems as if the great characteristic of our age was cynicism. Perhaps other ages have been marked by a cynical contempt of life, but certainly no age has been more troubled than our own with its half-contemptuous wonderings as to whether life in itself be worth all its costs; whether the monotony and the dreariness of living do not more than balance its advantages. Not from our noblest men, it is true, comes this expression of distaste for life and doubt of the value of its possibilities, but from a large number of men we hear complaints more or less cynical as to the uses or the pleasures of existence; and all down through society the complaint has spread, until even healthy, hearty boys in our colleges leave with contempt the contemplation of the young, vigorous, happy life into which they may enter to dwell on the dreary monotony to which a doubting, cynical scepticism reduces living. Strangely enough, this cynicism mingles with another tendency of our age—the vigorous, energetic pursuits of wealth, fame, and position, as if the effort to put these temporal blessings in the place of the eternal aspirations of immortal souls were not to result in all the baseness and gloominess of failure.

From both these errors the realisation of immortality will bring deliverance to the man who feverishly seeks satisfaction in the pursuit of objects which can never satisfy, as there comes a conviction of the smallness of the things for which he cares, when these things are seen in the light of eternal life. Are they worth doing when they are so useless? Then should he not take them for what they are worth, and use them only as means for the attainment of the real ends for which his soul must strive? My little bark floats on cross currents and eddies near the bank, and I try and steer it into some little haven thinking to rest it there; but let me once feel the force of the main stream, and know that under my keel the great current is hurrying on to the ocean, how soon I cease steering for the shore, and bend every sail toward the great object of my voyage. So, too, the great realisation of immortality must affect the man who feels the little things that he must do day by day to be so useless and insignificant, that he despises his life in the doing of them. A man may despise the conventionalities of life, but let him throw them aside merely in rebellion, without putting in their places anything great, anything noble, and he is a small man indeed. But let him in the light of immortality begin to live for something noble, true, and eternal, let him feel the eternal life, the gift of Jesus, stirring in his soul, and how soon the false conventionalities fall aside, and how easily he brings in the others that are not false, knowing that they cannot cramp or hinder the soul living in consciousness of its immortality.

II. See, again, how the truth of immortality affects the sin against which we are so constantly struggling. What is sin? Why struggle any longer against it? If my life is so short, let me enjoy my sin, and no more try to tear it from my heart and life. Certainly there have been noble souls, there are noble men to-day who, even with no knowledge of their immortality, will never say this, to whom sin is so evidently a violation of the laws of their life that, even with no thought of the future, they will struggle against it to the end which seems to them so final. But to the main part of mankind sin will not be easily resisted when there is no faith in the immortality of the soul. If I am but a wave of the ocean to keep form for a moment and then sink into nothing, what matter is it that the wave be broken into spray and lost a little before its time if it must sink at the last? But how terrible must sin appear to us when we think of man as immortal? Terrible enough, surely, when we think of what a man is that he should violate the laws of his being and sin. It is an awful thought that a young man should be impure and degraded who might be pure and holy; but how infinitely more terrible this becomes when we consider his sin in the light of immortality, and remember that the consequences of that sin must go on for ever and for ever.

III. Again, the truth of immortality should make life clear and true and simple. Always about every life there must be some mystery. Men are constantly seeking to shroud their actions in concealment and mystery. There is something in life that we seek to have mysterious, something that we do not wish fully understood.

COMPLETE SERMON

Let us feel the mystery of our being—to know the eternal life of God and the gift of immortality, and then our daily lives may be simple, clear, and true, lived before our fellow-men with no concealment or reserve.

We do not desire to deny that some men have lived noble lives, who have not known the truth of their immortality, and we rejoice in it; but the best would have been better for having known it, and would have lived nobler lives for its realisation. And to the most of us the conviction of our immortality will bring these gifts, an ennobling of life, a freedom from the slavery of its petty details, and a hatred of sin that will make it almost impossible for us to continue in it, together with an appreciation of the mystery of the life of God and of our relations to Him that shall make our lives simple, pure, and holy now. 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' How the Scriptures recognise the great dependence of humanity upon Jesus! As through one man came death and sin, so through another—Jesus—came the life of God, the eternal life to man.

Let us see for a moment how this truth of His immortality affected the human life of Jesus. From the first He realised it, and He was free from all smallness of soul. It was impossible in His full realisation of His immortality for Him to sin, and He lived a simple daily life of perfect unity with God; and so has He made possible for us the eternal life which he offers to us in His Resurrection.

For the youngest of us there are so few Easters left when we shall be permitted to come together, and tell each other the glorious news of immortality, that Jesus by His Resurrection makes manifest to our souls—will you not take to-day this gift of eternal life, not merely that you may go on for ever doing the little things you have always done, but to begin in Him, the new Adam, who offers it to you to-day, the life of eternity? So shall you be eager and happy in your present life, be delivered from its slavery and from its sin, and in the great mystery of the union of your humanity with Jesus, make your lives simple, clear, and pure, like His ransomed humanity, bound in with the sin of the first Adam, united through the Resurrection of Jesus essentially and for ever with the eternal life of God.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

EASTER DAY

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Mystery of the Christian Life.

If ye be then risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Colossians iii. 1.

‘HE died, He died in relation to sin, once for all; but in that he liveth, he liveth in relation to God, and therefore for ever. Thus do ye also consider yourselves dead men,’ insensible, immovable, ‘in relation to sin; and living men, full of energy and vigour, in relation to God, in Christ Jesus,’ that is by virtue of your union with Christ Jesus. ‘Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the desires thereof,’ that is, of the body: ‘neither present ye your members to sin’—personified, as one of two possible masters—‘as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as persons living after being dead, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under a law, but under grace’; under a system, not of working for life, but of free, unmerited, gratuitous acceptance.

And now we can return with a fully prepared mind to the direct subject of discourse. Now we perceive something of the real meaning of S. Paul when he wrote the words: ‘If ye then were raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Mind the things above, not the things on the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our Life, is manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory. Mortify then,’ deaden, reduce to a state of death, ‘your members upon the earth.’

In proportion as we can enter with understanding and heart into the mystery of the Christian life as here disclosed to us, we shall be happy and we shall be holy. See what S. Paul regarded as the essence of it. Union with Christ. A Christian is a person who is united to Christ. How united? By having one spirit with Christ: the same Holy Spirit dwelling in him, who is also the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God. That is union with a person; the having the same spirit with that other person. It is what no two earthly persons, no two human beings, can have: each man has his own spirit, and what other man knoweth the things of the man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? But that union which is impossible for human beings is possible between a man and Christ: and he, he only, is a Christian, who has it. ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.’

This is the essence of that union of which S. Paul speaks, which S. Paul himself experienced, which S. Paul describes as the common property of all Christians. It is the having Christ's Spirit for our spirit. It is the having our whole being directed, and as it were pervaded, by that Holy Spirit who is one with Christ in heaven.

I. Now S. Paul traced the commencement of this union to the time of baptism. Addressing persons who had, no doubt, for the most part, received baptism in mature life, when already penitent, already believing, he bade them trace back their union with Christ to that public and real transition from a state of Judaism or of heathenism to a life of faith and of holiness, and said to them, ‘Know ye not that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?’ or, as he elsewhere expresses it in writing to the Galatians, ‘All ye who were baptized into Christ did then put on (clothe yourselves with) Christ.’

We, in too many cases, need to seek a vital union with Christ at a far later point of earthly life. Let me say of that necessity, It is a real one: be not deceived into putting anything else in the place of a vital union with Christ; that union which consists in having the Holy Spirit of Christ to dwell in you. But let me add, Let no one teach you to despise the comfort and the promise contained in that simple ordinance of Baptism, which is as much of Christ's ordaining, of Christ's sanctioning, of Christ's blessing, as any human institution ever was the ordinance of any human institutor. If unhappily in our days the ontward ordinance and the highest gift have too often parted company, yet, remember, that ordinance is still a standing pledge, to every person who has been subjected to it, and to the whole world which stands by and looks on, of Christ's willingness, of Christ's will, to convey the inward gift to each soul that desires it, yes, to that soul when and if it desires it. Baptism the outward ordinance, and the promise in words that He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, are two harmonious and co-ordinate assurances from the throne of Christ in heaven that, if we have not, it is because we ask not; if we perish, it is not His will, but our own; if we will only turn to Him, though it be late and timidly and sorrowfully, He is most ready to receive us, yea, even before we call, He will answer.

II. Such is the Christian standing. It is a condition of union with Christ. Every baptized person ought to have that union; for to every baptized person who shall desire it is the gift of the Holy Spirit promised. But no person must take it for granted that he has received that gift, that availing gift, of the Holy Spirit. He has not unless he asks for it; asks humbly, asks earnestly, asks perseveringly. He has it not unless it is working a change in him; a gradual, a growing conformity to the mind of Christ and to the life of Christ. By these signs shall he know himself: 'examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.'

II. We are reminded too, in the passage before us, not only of the present position, but also of the coming change, of a Christian. 'When Christ, our Life, is manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory.' At present, though Christ is, and though the inner life of a Christian is a real thing, yet there is a veil over both, which hides the reality from the eyes of men, and makes it possible for the unbelieving to doubt and to deny it.

There is a veil between us and Christ. 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' 'Blessed are they who have not seen yet have believed.' But that veil will be taken away: 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' when the appointed time comes, He will be revealed: unveiled, disclosed, manifested; 'every eye shall see Him'; and wonderful, incredible, will it then seem to the now most incredulous, that they could ever for one moment have gainsayed or forgotten His glory.

And there is a veil too over the life of a Christian. Men see not his connection with One within the veil. They hear not his communings with that invisible world and with Him who dwells there. They know not in what strength he walks, through whom he conquers, by what supplies his inner life is fed, or what is the intrinsic dignity of a position oftentimes so humble. But they shall see, they shall know. 'When Christ, our Life, is manifested, then shall he be manifested with Him in glory.' That is the time elsewhere spoken of as 'the manifestation of the sons of God.'

III. Finally, let the thoughts on which we have dwelt, not only quicken in us an earnest longing after that union with Christ of which such glorious things are spoken, but also turn to a very practical use this high and holy commemoration. 'Mortify therefore,' S. Paul says, 'your members which are upon the earth.' Spare nothing that offends in you: you will be glad and thankful one day to have swept it clean away. It will not bring you peace at the last to have spared one darling lust, one rebellious temper. It will be your tormentor, be quite sure, before all is over. And oh the deep peace, the bright hope, the sense of strength, the consciousness of being cared for and helped from on high, which springs out of one resolute conflict waged and carried through against the power of sin!

DEAN VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Resurrection and Character.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Col. iii. 1.

THE Scriptural notion is that the belief in Christ's Resurrection ought to produce exaltation of character.

The conflict between lower and higher natures, in which victory is 'Salvation.'—Rom. vii.

Now many men are quite awake to this fact, in whom the higher nature does not consciously draw anything from Christianity.

How is this struggle upward affected by the fact of the Resurrection, and the corollaries thereof?

I. Look at the reverse side:

If this life be all, frankly, why should I labour to be good?

It is a painful discipline—a restraint—may be a veritable 'crucifixion.'

I may be cut off in the midst of the struggle, and thus lose all my pains.

It is clear that just in proportion as doubt of immortality grows, my struggle will relax.

Also, anything which steadies my belief here will intensify my struggle.

II. This age peculiarly needs some reinforcement at this point.

It is a 'materialistic' age.

[May this not be found to be its crowning honour?]

The first time in which moral good had reached a point of such fixedness that God could trust it to be busy with natural phenomena without risk of letting go things unseen.

III. Now just how much—and just what—has Christianity to offer to the world in this mood?

1. The fact of Christ's Resurrection.

(The Revelation very vague as to just what this was—nature of the 'resurrection body,' etc.)

But the long spell of silence in which the grave has lain is broken!

2. The belief that in this He was not exceptional, but 'the firstborn among many brethren.'

3 The 'reigning' Christ.

[Get rid of physical notion of 'going up,' as though heaven were far away, from which He makes incursions.]

A human mind and heart at the centre of force!

The idea is very startling: it has an immediate effect upon the conception of prayer, providence, judgment.

The enormous stimulus there is in all this to follow the higher rather than the lower 'reason.' S. D. M'CONNELL.

Christian Advance.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. COLOSSIANS iii. 1.

I. NOTICE the basis upon which S. Paul puts forward his view of the life of the Christian as a life of advance. The basis is this: he maintains, and maintains earnestly, to those to whom he wrote, that their life had passed through a crisis. He warns them that there had been a special time, marked by a special external witness, when that life had advanced out of one sphere of being into another; and therefore, because upon the fact of this momentous change he based his view of their life, the exhortation of the text had real force.

The regenerating grace of the Spirit of God, acting upon the soul of the creature that God has formed, has the power to place—ay, and places—that soul, in a state of death, as regards the mere world around it, in a state of resurrection as regards that higher world above. Now, on that fundamental fact—a fact which S. Paul speaks of as being indisputable—he bases the exhortation of the text, teaching that the Christian life is henceforth a life of advance.

II. What is it that Christianity does for us, in teaching us that to advance is a characteristic of the Christian life? It possesses itself of our natural yearnings, of those mysterious longings which we have by right of the dignity and sorrow of our moral nature—these it takes, and before them it places objects sufficiently powerful and attractive, to give them precision. It gives precision to what was vague before. You and I have henceforth the definite 'somewhat'; we are no longer grasping after shadows and clouds.

Now what is that definite 'somewhat'? What is it the Apostle offers to us as the guiding star of our advance? I answer at once, 'The things that are above.'

Spiritual gifts, divine illuminations, the whispers of the Spirit of God are eternal treasures. What S. Paul would remind you of is the fact, that it is not a vague, a shadowy thing that you are groping after, but a real treasure from a real treasure-house. Call them what you may; leave them unnamed if you cannot name them; call them by the name he gives them if you find no better—glorious murmurs of God striking your ear with sounds of eternity—whispers of the

Spirit, that tell you tales which are 'mystic, wonderful,'—'the secrets of the Lord' to 'them that fear him'; spiritual gifts and graces within you—these are 'the things which are above.'

III. 'Seek those things which are above,' and the tone of life is changed.

Christ is more than an ideal. He is an object. To advance along life—the Christian life—is to advance nearer to Christ. It was so with Paul. He knew Him externally; he accepted His revelations; he took hold of the idea of His character; he learned the truth that had been revealed. But at last he learned to know more, much more, of Christ than could thus be learned. Why? Because, attracted towards that object of desire, he was advancing. He knew no longer Christ 'according to the flesh'; he knew Him in a deeper, in a spiritual sense. To gaze at Him as His likeness is sketched in the Gospels is a great blessing, a great help; but to feel His Presence within, as the soul tries to answer to all the touches of His penetrating grace, is to know Him spiritually, and become closer to Him. The power of an advancing life is the seeking indeed these 'things above' by willing conformity to the upward impulse of the grace of God, and with the living hope, which Christianity supplies, of ultimate attainment; but above all the spring of that life advancing over all parts of the being, in consecration of gifts, use of graces, growth of high thoughts, perfection of desires, is a fixedness of loving gaze on that one central figure where all find their embodiment and their glorification, the figure of the enthroned and glorified Jesus, the ideal of that higher, heavenly life, the object of the love of the Redeemed. CANON KNOX LITTLE.

The Christian's Life hid in Christ.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Colossians iii. 2.

WE are in the midst of two worlds, a seen and an unseen, as we ourselves are two selves, one seen and the other unseen; a body which is seen and a soul unseen, and the unseen putting itself forth, from time to time, among the things which are seen, showing itself in our countenance, at the last marking it in a degree, and impressing some portion of our character upon it, yet still, for the most part, unseen, except by God. And even our very soul is of a twofold character, belonging in part to the world of sense, fitted to act upon it and to be acted upon by it, in part to the unseen world; and belonging most to either, according as the corrupt nature which we inherited from Adam, or the new life, communicated through union with the Lord, gains the mastery. And each of these worlds is in one way real; in that each acts upon our soul, and forms real impressions upon it, and moulds it for an eternal existence, in heaven or hell. But to us, that only is real which we realise. As we live to the seen world or to the unseen, to the god of this world or to Him who is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, so are they real to us. Our soul hangeth, as it were, between the two worlds, and as it is drawn down to things of sense, or upwards towards that unapproachable glory wherein God dwells, so does it live, as it were, within the sphere of heavenly things or of earthly, is taken into either, and, in the things which are ever present to it, loses sight of those from which it is withdrawn. As persons are most conversant about flesh or spirit, they acquire faculties for perceiving that, and lose the power of understanding the other.

I. Since the Christian's 'life is hid,' it follows that we must not be surprised if the world misunderstands and speaks hardly of those who would be Christ's. It is because they are Christ's that the world understandeth them not. 'Behold,' says the beloved disciple, 'what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.' The Christian, in that he hath the life of Christ, must, in all things, be partaker with Christ. Since Christ was not understood, neither will the Christian. Since 'He was in the world, and the world knew Him not,' neither will it know those who are His. Since the world hated Him, so will it hate those whom He has chosen out of it. They who are most like Christ will be least understood by the world; and where we see one, whose holiness we know, much misunderstood, it seems a token the more of his especial nearness to his Lord. So would God, by all things, draw us off from the world, teaching us by its misunderstandings, to look to Him, by whom alone we are known; by its enmity to love Him; by its dispraise, to seek His praise; by its want of sympathy, to seek to be 'hid with Christ in' Him.

II. Then, also for ourselves, since our life is hid, and we understand only so much as we, by acting, know, we must beware how we prejudge anything not to be useful to us, which comes to us in the form of untried self-discipline, or self-denial. For it is by trial only that we know it. It is one of the most frequent hindrances to 'a more excellent way,' that instead of trying it men ask of what good is it. S. Augustine records how, in his unconverted state, he was amazed at the self-denying life of S. Ambrose; how he admired what S. Ambrose most dreaded, that 'personages so great held him in such honour,' thought hardest, what was his self-discipline. 'What hope he bore within him, what struggles he had against the temptations which beset his very excellencies, or what comfort in adversities, and what sweet joys Thy Bread had for the hidden mouth of his soul, I neither could conjecture, nor had experienced.' At every stage of life, knowledge of obedience. Would we know the value of anything, we must do it.

III. And in this our course, since our life is hid, neither must we be downcast if we have not all the refreshment we would have, nor see at once the end of our actions or our own. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' As the full life of the blessed is hid even from the saints here, and from that Ineffable Light which it is, there flash forth only some gleams of bliss, in fervent prayer, in Sacraments, in contemplation of our Lord, which come to us as angel-tokens from His Presence, so throughout, in each portion of our life. We are hidden from ourselves. We know not what we are. We see ourselves, as we are, encompassed by death, and, amidst this death, have earnests of life. We have 'the firstfruits of the Spirit' putting themselves forth in love and faith and hope; but since our love is imperfect, so is our life and our sense of life. The source of our life is our Lord, hidden in God, streaming forth thence upon us, through the Blessed Comforter, discovering itself in holy aspirations, the yearnings of the soul, the 'unutterable groanings' wherewith we long to be freed from our remaining death, hidden strength, unseen victories; but since it is hidden, we must not long for it, as though it were already revealed. Had we the fulness of that life, it were heaven itself. Now we have at one time the brightness of His Presence, at another, it is veiled from us; that we may be cheered onward when it is shining upon us, and humbled when it is withdrawn; that in its brightness we may lose all other love, in its withdrawal hate ourselves and our own sins; so, whether in the heaviness of the night or the joy of the morning, refreshment or depression, the 'pillar of fire' or the 'cloud' shall alike conduct us, night and day, to the Canaan of our everlasting rest and joy.

This, then, is our office; to see how, day by day, we may be ourselves more hidden from the world, that we may be more with God; how to discharge our duties in it, so as more to forget ourselves and remember God only; to consider this only, how they may be done, so as best to please Him; how self may least mingle in them; to seek no by-ends of our own, no applause of men, nor our own; rather to seek how we may escape men's praise, that we may win God's; escape men's sight and be seen by our 'Father who seeth in secret' only, and have that in store with Him, which He, 'in the last day,' 'will reward openly'; to be content with the least; desire no more than we have; be thankful to escape the snares of those who have what we have not; be glad, if it may be, to have less, that others may abound; to disburden ourselves of wealth by giving to Christ's poor; forget self in others, love others in God; seek only to be buried with Christ from this world and its vanities, hidden in His tomb, so that all the show and pomps of this world may but flit around us as unreal things, but not catch our gaze, nor draw our hearts, which have been 'buried with Him' and are 'now risen with Him.'

E. B. PUSEY.

Risen with Christ.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' Colossians iii. 1.

THE Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave speaks both to the understanding and to the heart of man, but it speaks, first of all, to the understanding. In days like ours, when the minds of men are much exercised about the grounds of faith, the Resurrection has come to occupy the same sort of prominence in Christian teaching that belonged to it in the very first days of the Christian Church. It is the great occurrence which, beyond any other in human history, proves to man that Christianity is from God. Christ Himself appeals to it as the certificate of His claims; His Apostle stakes the whole cause of Christianity upon its being literally true—'If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, your faith is also vain.' But the Resurrection has a moral and devotional aspect too: it is at once the pattern of a true Christian life, and it is the force which invigorates it. 'Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' According to S. Paul, the great mysterious transactions of our Lord's life, His death, His burial, His Resurrection, are not to be looked at as merely events external to Christians which took place in a distant country and in an age long past; they are repeated in the soul of every sincere convert who seeks Christian baptism. First of all, the old sinful nature was crucified; we are 'crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin'; and next, the soul is 'buried with Him in baptism,' hidden away, as it were, in the tomb of Christ from the associations of the old life; and, lastly, it was raised, raised to a new level of faith and practice, of thought and feeling, which he calls 'newness of life.' The likeness of Christ's death was to be followed by the likeness of the Resurrection. The power of His Resurrection was to assert itself in movement ever victorious and upward, whereby the soul, while yet on earth, incessantly seeks its true and eternal home. 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.'

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

I. 'Seek things that are above.' This is the business, first of all, of a man's understanding, of the understanding of a Christian who is risen with Christ.

Easter is surely a summons to thought. It bids thought rise upwards, rise heavenwards with the rising Christ. The Resurrection is not merely a symbol, it is the warrant as well as the pattern of its mental movement. By rising from the grave Jesus Christ has made it possible for man to seek things above as he never sought them before. Before Christ rose men had thought and written about another world, sometimes under the guidance of the earlier revelation which was made to Israel, sometimes by the light of the natural reason which was the guide to the peoples of heathendom, but at best the veil was only half—if it was half—withdrawn. There was no clear light, no working and recognised certainty, nothing that would stand the wear and tear of discussion, of passion, of trouble, of life as it is. Men looked and gazed, but nature, with its sullen uniformities, was too much for them, and when thought would rise to a world beyond, nature seemed again and again to frown discouragement, and thought shrank back again and buried itself with a pathetic despair in the dust of earth. But Jesus rose from the grave in which they had laid Him, and all was changed. His Resurrection was a sensible interference from a higher world with the laws and the rules of this. It broke in upon the stern order of decay and death, which thus at once became a foil of its own immense significance; it proved to the very senses of men that there is a life beyond the grave and a heaven into which they whom we name the dead may enter; and so it bade thought rise upwards with the rising Christ, not merely into a new and glorious earthly life such as that which preceded the Ascension, but also into that world beyond the stars into which He passed to prepare a place for us.

Seek, then, those things that are above, seek the conversation of the wise and the instructed. Study if you will the masterpieces, the highest masterpieces of literature; make the most of whatever enlarges and ennobles your conceptions of nature and of human life; in all the higher and purer regions of thought you are nearer Christ even though His name be not uttered. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,' think of these things, for even if they do not bear His name, they are assuredly in their essence His. But as you seek let your cry be ever 'Excelsior.' Rest not in the highest regions of earthly excellence, do not be satisfied until you have struggled upward beyond literature, beyond science, beyond nature into that world which human thought may enter under the guidance of revelation, into that Kingdom of Heaven which, since the Redeemer died and rose, has indeed been open to all believers—that world in which the King of Glory sits adored by tens of thousands of the highest intelligences, and ennobling human thought even by the distant sight of His transcendent glory.

II. 'Seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' Yes, seek those things that are above; for this is the business not merely of the understanding, but of the affections. The Apostle, as he wrote, was thinking even more of the affections than of the understanding, for he continues, 'Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.' The affections are a particular form or department of desire, and desire is the strongest motive power in the soul of man. Desire is to a soul what the force of gravitation is to a material body; and thus it is that, when we have ascertained the objects upon which desire is set, we know the direction which a soul is taking. If those objects are in heaven, the soul is moving upwards and heavenwards; if they are on earth, the soul follows, it is sinking downwards. 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' Desire is the raw material which is fashioned, on the one hand, into covetousness, or ambition, or sensuality; and, on the other hand, into the love of God. It becomes of this or of that complexion according to the objects which it pursues, and thus S. Augustine has finely said, 'Whithersoever I am being borne, it is love that bears me' (*quocunque feror, amore feror*).

Grace is with 'all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,' and for this, among other reasons, did He rise from His grave that He might draw the affections of men upwards from earth to heaven, and so might lead them to gravitate surely towards Himself, the only Being in loving whom the heart can never risk exhaustion or disappointment.

III. 'Seek those things that are above.' Here is, lastly, an effort for the sovereign faculty, for the will. It is not reason, it is not feeling, it is will which in the last resort rules the soul, and by which, therefore, the great question of its destiny must be decided. And, therefore, it is the will that the Apostle mainly addresses. 'O will of man!' he seems to say, 'seek those things that are above.' Grant that this will is weakened by an inheritance of moral disease, this weakness has been corrected at least in those who are risen with Christ. Christ has washed them with His Blood; Christ has poured into them, by His Spirit, His justifying and invigorating grace, so that they can do as they list if they only have the heart and the loyalty to do it. 'I can do all things,' said S. Paul, 'through Christ that strengtheneth me.' Away with the faint-hearted and false notion that religious effort, after all, is an affair of temperament. Natural disposition may make things easy or difficult. It cannot either promote or arrest the onward, upward movement of a free, because regenerate, will. We Christians seek things above, or, alas! in our worst moments, we seek things below, at our discretion. We have been made masters of ourselves by Christ. We cannot shift the responsibility which attaches to us by putting it upon the very circumstances which are placed within our control.

H. P. LIDDON.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Return from the Sepulchre.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. S. JOHN xx. 10.

'THE disciples then went away again unto their own home.' They went, we know, with hopes revived and hearts comforted. They went, to expect further communications from Him whom they now know to be alive from the dead. They went to recall to mind the words which He had so lately spoken, but to which they had listened at the time with hearts so deaf that it was as if they had never heard them. They went, to talk one to another of the things which had happened. They went, to give thanks to God for all that they had been permitted to hear and to see of their Divine Master, and to try to carry out in their daily lives the instructions which He had given and the example which He had set them.

Let us ponder the senses in which we may be said to-night to resemble the disciples here spoken of as returning from the sight of the deserted sepulchre, which was to them the assurance of Christ's life after death, to their several homes and occupations, with feelings so much altered from anything they had known before.

I. Let me say then, first of all, that we ought to return to our homes and to our occupations with hopes revived and hearts comforted.

To-day the part of the truth which has been presented to us distinctly is the Resurrection of Christ: the fact, the simple yet marvellous fact, that, after really dying, by that death which we have looked upon during the past week in its circumstances and in its details; after being buried in a particular place and before several witnesses; after lying in the state of death, His tomb guarded and watched, through a portion of three days, by those who were interested to prevent the removal of the body by any secret or collusive means; and after passing, as to His soul, into that condition, whatever it be, which men's souls pass into when separated from the body; a condition expressed in our Creed by the words, 'He descended into hell,' that is, into Hades, into the place or the state of departed spirits between death and resurrection; the fact, I say, that, after these realities of death, burial, and sojourn in the Paradise of the departed, He did rise again out of death; His soul returned to the lifeless body, and He became again a living man, invested with that transformed, that immortal body, which dieth no more, which needs no more the things which are necessary to the life of this world, but is ready to take its place above in the everlasting presence of God.

We ought to go home with hopes revived and hearts comforted by having gazed to-day upon the Resurrection of Christ. I am sure you are glad that He has risen. Cherish that feeling. It is a good one for all of us. It is a sound and a safe and a salutary one for all of us. Thank God for His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. All these things are inseparably bound up in the assurance that Christ who died lives again. Go home rejoicing that it is so: and be assured that in that very rejoicing lies for you the germ of life.

II. And this brings us naturally to the second point touched upon. We should return home, as did the first disciples, to expect further communications from Him whom we believe to be alive from the dead.

We should be ill-off if we too might not expect further communications, beyond what we have already received, from our risen Saviour. I do not mean that we expect, or ought to expect, new revelations from Him. In His Word we have all that we need of this kind. But new communications from Him we do greatly need; and they who ask for them shall have them. I would have you enter again upon your common occupations, with the full expectation, even as the disciples doubtless did, of hearing and seeing more than you have yet heard and seen of your living Lord.

Expect every day to see more of Christ, by communicating directly with Him, and with God through Him, by the Holy Spirit.

III. I mentioned as a third point in the condition of the disciples spoken of in the text—and it is one equally applicable to us—that they returned from the sepulchre to remember Christ's words.

They had heard Him say many things, careful as He was to teach them gradually and appropriately, which at the time they did not understand. This very fact of the Resurrection was an instance of it. Again and again it had been foretold to them during His earthly life. And yet in the verse before the text we are expressly told that 'as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.' It is a striking instance of the way in which all truth affects the human mind. It requires that there should be something in us to which it can assimilate itself. We all know that one of the higher discoveries of a science is altogether unintelligible to us, its statement a merely unmeaning sound in our ears, until we have learned the principles of that science, and risen step by step to the particular truth in question. So was it with the disciples, during the earthly ministry of Christ, in reference to the things that were to befall Him at its close. They had their own idea of what it was likely and of what it was becoming that He should be, and, so long as they retained that prejudice, they could not learn what He was and was to be. It was not until after the Resurrection that His words began to come back upon them as voices and not sounds. Then indeed, in that interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, they had occupation enough in recalling to themselves the things which He had spoken, in pondering their unsuspected meaning, and in marvelling at their own unbelief in having listened as it were without hearing.

Even thus is it with us after every real apprehension of the Resurrection and immortal life of Christ. We go back to our homes to remember His words.

IV. Once again, the disciples went away to their own home to talk one to another of the things which had happened.

Those who have together commemorated the reality of Christ's Resurrection, can scarcely go home to be silent altogether, from day to day, as to the faith and the hope which are deeply cherished within. Or, if they speak not, at least they will indicate one to another, by signs not to be misunderstood, that they are pursuing the same end, by the same means, through the same difficulties, in the same strength.

V. I add yet one last particular. The disciples went back to their own homes full of thankfulness to God for all that He had permitted them to see and hear of Christ, and desirous to show that thankfulness by obeying the directions and by following the example of their beloved Master.

And surely this ought to be the parting word, the abiding impression, of our Easter Day. DEAN VAUGHAN.

EASTER DAY

Mary's Perplexity at the Empty Tomb.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. S. JOHN xx. 13.

I. FIRST, Mary Magdalene reaches the sepulchre and finds the stone rolled away. She does not look within: she sees no angel: she returns to the city by some other and shorter path than that along which her companions were advancing. She returns to share her anxieties with S. Peter and with S. John. And then the other women reach the sepulchre. They, too, find the stone rolled away. Unlike Mary they enter the sepulchre, and they are bidden by an angel, whom they find there, to return to Jerusalem and to inform S. Peter and the disciples that Christ had risen. Meanwhile Mary Magdalene is on her way back to the sepulchre to pay it a second visit, this time in company with S. Peter and S. John. These disciples examine the tomb and return to the city, leaving Mary alone before the empty grave. There she stands, as the lesson which has just been read to us describes her: there she stands weeping and solitary in the bitterness of her grief. This time she stoops down and looks in and sees the traces of the Body of Jesus Christ. And then, almost listlessly and without intending it, she enters into conversation with the angels. Jesus is the one thought that fills her soul, and when she is asked why she weeps she answers, 'Because they have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid Him.'

Mary Magdalene, then, during the first hours of Easter Day must not be merged in the company of devout women who visited the tomb of Jesus Christ. Her relation to the Resurrection is all her own: it is unique. She, the frail woman, she, the crushed, broken-hearted penitent, makes the first visit to our Saviour's tomb. To her He appears alive before He appears either to S. Peter or to S. John, and the secret of this, her high distinction among the first and greatest servants of Christ, is her love. She loved much. This had been the reason of old for her full and free forgiveness. She loved much. this was the motive power which associates her more than any human being with Christ's Resurrection-glory. And surely there is reason in this; for what is rightly regulated love but moral power of the highest order? As S. Paul puts it, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Few men have ever explored the heights and depths of our human nature more thoroughly than the great Augustine. And S. Augustine has a saying which shows how highly he rated the practical power of love. 'Only love,' he said, 'and then thou mayest do what thou wilt.'

Love is indeed the very muscle and fibre of moral force. If the condition of mankind at large is bettered, this is effected by men who love their fellow-men. If goodness is embodied in life and character, this is by those who begin by seeing, however imperfectly, the beauty of goodness, and are enamoured of it before they try to make it their own. If truth is sought and found amid and across difficulties which have seemed insuperable, this is by intellects to which truth has presented itself as an object in itself so beautiful as to win the love of their hearts. And if Mary rose in the dark night to visit the grave of her slain Master, and to pay Him such honours as her poverty could yield, this was because her soul was on fire with the moral power of a strong and pure affection, which was to be rewarded presently by the attainment of its object.

II. Mary Magdalene waiting before the empty tomb of Jesus reappears in each generation of Christians. It is not hard, at least for some of us, to recognise her among ourselves. She is the type of those souls which have a genuine love of religion, but which, from whatever cause, and in various ways, are for a time at any rate disappointed in it. And religious disappointment is hard to bear, hard in proportion to the genuineness and sincerity of a man's character, because it is rightly felt that so much is in peril while this disappointment lasts; for religion invites a larger stake, a more ruinous investment, so to put it, of thought and feeling than any other subject, in proportion to its transcendent importance; and when those who have given up much, if not all else, that they may win this, think that they have missed what they hoped to have,—when those who, like the merchant in the parable, have sold their all to buy the pearl of great price, suppose, though it be, indeed, without reason and only for a while, that what they have purchased is a flint, the recoil of baffled hope is even terrible. Take the not uncommon case of a person who, for some years, for whatever reason, has paid scant attention to religious matters. He may not have broken God's law in any flagrant way: he may not have been the prodigal son of the parable: he may only have been an eager man of business, or an accomplished man of letters, or a great favourite in society, or a dreamer of unpractical but absorbing dreams. But, anyhow, he has lost sight of God. God has had, I do not say something less than His true place in the man's thought, but scarcely any place at all. Still he brings something of what he learnt from his mother, something of his early prayers, something of his Bible, something, it may be, of the happiness and glow of a confirmation, of a first communion; and as he knows that the years are passing quickly, and that he must soon be in his grave, he trusts himself to the guidance of these memories of the past: he sets out—it is a painful, it is a creditable effort—he sets out to visit the sepulchre of his early life as a Christian, within which he trusts to find again the substance of religious wellbeing—the Body of Jesus. He sets out with Mary Magdalene that he may renew his old homage to the person of his Lord, and, like Mary, perchance he finds that the mouth of the sepulchre is now wide open and that the Body of Jesus is gone. He recollects what he used to think about sacred subjects, but somehow his old thoughts will not recur to him. He cannot recognise the accustomed haunts of his spirit. The old language of thirty years ago is no longer to him what it was. There is something in the air, it seems, which has changed the aspect of what was once for him so full of grace and life, and he gazes on it as on the shell of an extinct creature—as on the ruined castle of a noble race. He opens his Bible, but somehow it is interesting to him only as literature. It is no more to him than Shakespeare, or some other work of human genius. It does not speak to his undying spirit: for him the Body of Jesus is not there. He tries to pray, and prayer to him is only like poetry—an exercise which warms the soul, but which is not felt to be anything like actual converse with an unseen person: the Body of Jesus is not there. He will do his best. He even approaches the Holy Communion, but here again he finds only a symbolical ceremony which recalls the dead past. There is no sense of contact with the living Lord of life. The Body of Jesus, so far as his experience goes—he knows nothing of the absolute reality—the Body of Jesus is not even there. Everywhere he sees traces of the old presence which haunts his memory. He counts up the napkins and the linen clothes, he measures the chamber in which, as his memory reports, his Lord had lain; but now there are voices about that tell him how much has changed since those days of which he is thinking. They say that much that then kept out light and air has been rolled away, that many a scheme for setting a watch over the grave of some crucified truth has been defeated, that many a truth, buried out of sight by the ignorance or the scorn of man, has risen to a new and glorious life, and that all is not really lost, as it seems to him. He listens to these voices, perplexed, half incredulous, yet not altogether without hope; but he still murmurs sadly that criticism, or controversy, or the spirit of the time, or religious movements of this kind or that, have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and he knows not where they have laid Him. Is it not possible that he is repeating the mistake—the very intelligible mistake—of Mary Magdalene—that he is forgetting the meaning of the lapse of time? Mary assumed that she would find on Easter morning all that had been left, as it was left, on the late evening of Good Friday. She knew not that there are hours in the life of souls which may count for centuries, and that she had been living through such hours as these. She did not think that the Body of her Saviour might be preserved to her, not in the tomb where they laid Him, but under new conditions, in the freedom of the glorified body which passed the sealed doors—which ascended to the heavens. Had Mary remained at the sepulchre from the burial onwards—had she perseveringly sat, as did Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, in her tragic sorrow before the corpses of her slain sons—had she sat continuously over against the sepulchre through the first and second nights after the death of the Lord—she must have witnessed the Resurrection. She would have seen the stone rolled away: she would have seen the body, reanimated by the holy soul of Jesus, flash forth from the tomb into the darkness of the night. As it was, she had been absent: she had lost the thread of continuity which linked the present to the past, and so she was perplexed. In time she found that her Lord was there as before, but in the garden—not in the grave—but a living source of life—not a dead body to be covered with spices and ointments.

Nor need it be otherwise with such a case as I am considering. A generation has passed since you were a boy, and a generation counts for much in a busy age like this. What wonder if some of those associations of your boyish mind have been disturbed. Depend upon it, the Body of Jesus is not lost. Do not despair because you cannot find it at the moment, amid the old conditions, between the grave-clothes and the napkin, in the sepulchre of a bygone time. Distinguish between the unchanging, indestructible object of the religious life of the soul of man, and the ever-shifting moods of human thought and feeling around it as the generations pass. Be patient, as Mary was patient, hopeful, as Mary was hopeful, and your share in Mary's tears will surely be followed by Mary's joy. It is encompassing a new mental and moral development of your spiritual nature. It is, perhaps, in nothing less than in an inward resurrection with Christ that you will recover for your Bible, for your prayers, for your communions, all of—or rather much more than—their old meaning. You will have exchanged Jesus in the tomb for Jesus in the garden—the religious thought and resolve of a boy for the religious horizons and aspirations of a ripened manhood.

H. P. LIDDON.

EASTER DAY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Risen Christ.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One, and I was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Rev. i. 17, 18 (Revised Version).

IT is the exalted Christ who is before us, on this bright Easter Day. Let us consider what is said about Him—not only in the text, but also in the entire passage to which the text belongs.

I. First, then, the description given. Now, unless I am much mistaken, we are not to suppose that the figure of Jesus Christ, which the Apostle tells us he beheld, is precisely the figure of the Lord as He appears at this moment in the Kingdom of Heaven. What Saul saw when he fell from his horse on the road to Damascus; what the first martyr, Stephen, saw just before his furious enemies flew at him, and dragged him away to his death—was, I venture to believe, Jesus Christ as you and I should behold Him if our eyes were opened—Jesus Christ as He is. But the figure in S. John's description is evidently symbolical. You cannot realise it, and it is well not to attempt to do so. It ought to be left in our minds as a mental conception, without endeavouring to give it the definite expression of form. It represents Christ, but is not Christ—just as the seven golden candlesticks represent the seven churches of Asia, but are obviously not those churches; just as the circle of stars held in the hand of the Saviour stands for, and only stands for, the chief pastors of those Christian communities. And yet, on the other hand, there is a life, a movement, a power about the figure, that seems to remove it from the region of mere symbolism. We have speech, we have the laying-on of the right hand, we have the penetrating glance of the eye. So that one is a little perplexed as to the real nature of the vision, and hardly knows what to think or to say about it. However, this is clear enough, that we are intended to gather from the vision facts of the deepest importance, both about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and about His present management of the Church. Here we have no difficulty.

From the appearance of Christ we learn what He is now. In the long white garment, reaching far down the person, and just displaying the feet; and in the broad golden girdle, the symbol of royalty, bound round the breast—we have the picture of the Priest-King on His throne. The whitened hair, although in man it betokens the failure of power through the advance of age, in this connection symbolises the great fact that Jesus is the Ancient of Days, the mysterious Being who is from everlasting to everlasting. Every other feature of the description bespeaks irresistible strength.

II. 'I am the first and the last,' says Christ. The 'first,' because from Him all things proceed as from their origin; the 'last,' because towards Him—and to Him—all things tend, as to the purpose and object for which they are called into existence. It is impossible to conceive of a title more distinctly pointing to the peculiar prerogatives of Deity than this. Three times, in the prophecies of Isaiah, it is applied to Jehovah. Here Jesus Christ takes it to Himself. And He who is the source of all things, and the end of all things, cannot but be God. Next, 'I am the Living One,' *i.e.* 'I alone have life in Myself; and from Me, as from a fountain, all created life flows.' We are reminded of the words, 'uncaused Himself, but causing all beside.' He has obtained a victory in which His people participate. He hath made the dreaded King of Terrors His servant and ours; and He has been invested with complete control over the awful kingdom of the unseen world.

III. Christ is not only the Lord of death, He is the Lord of Hades. Hades—(not 'Hell,' as we have it in the Authorised Version)—Hades, before Christ appeared and accomplished His great redeeming work on earth, was an object of scarcely less aversion and dread than death itself. Men knew nothing of that dim, vast, shadowy, unseen region beyond the grave. They asked themselves: what were the conditions of existence into which they would be ushered? what the companionships they would find there? what the occupations in which they would be engaged? what the effect of their residence in that dark abode? But they found no answer. No one, out of all the millions that had left the earth, had ever come back to tell them. But, again, Christ altered this. And now, we know and are sure that His people pass, when they pass behind the veil, into the society of the blessed dead who have died in the Lord, and into a more blessed proximity to Christ than any that they could possibly have enjoyed whilst living here below. Of course, they are with Christ now, and Christ with them. But in a far higher sense will they be 'with Christ' when they go hence, and are no more seen.

G. ALTHROP.

EASTER DAY

Christ and His Members United by the Holy Spirit.

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living beings, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. Rev. v. 6.

I. THE union of Christ with His people, and of them with Him, is a thing which may be described, in the light of the New Testament, as not only a great truth of spiritual life, but the truth of truths. It is related to all other kindred doctrines as that which combines, harmonises, and explains them. It appears as the end, where they appear as means. Hither they gather and converge. Is it repentance? Is it faith? Is it regeneration? Is it justification of the person? Is it sanctification of the nature, the will, the affections, the life, the self? All stands related to this holy union.

The sacred mediation of the heavenly Spirit, the conveyance through Him of every blessing of the vital union, appears everywhere in the subject. In the parable of the Vine and Branches, indeed, He is not explicitly mentioned. But the context of the whole discourse is so full of Him that He is assuredly implied as the life-bond, the life-secret that flows and is poured from the hidden root into the happy branches, their blossoms and their clusters. In the imagery of the Bridal it is to a life 'in the newness of the Spirit' that the Spouse of Christ is called. In the imagery of the Building it is 'in the Spirit' that the saints, compacted into their Corner-Stone, are 'being builded together to be the habitation of God.'

The Sevenfold One is sent forth into all the earth, as the Eyes, as the Presence, of the exalted Lamb of the Sacrifice. It is by Him, and by Him alone, that that presence is in the Church, and is in the Christian.

II. 'Sent forth into all the earth': from the presence of the Blessed, from the Heaven of Heavens, into all the earth; from the heart of God to the heart of man; from amidst the song of the heavenly elders to you and to me, to the circumstances of our life to-day, to the stones and dust, the thorns and mire of our path, to the snares and the illusions, to the crowds and to the solitude of earth. Yes, He is sent forth into the present, the visible, the temporal. He is intended, He intends Himself, to be no dreamy abstraction above our heads and hearts, but to be the inmost friend, the living strength, the infinitely ready and versatile resource and expedient of the hour of your temptation and of mine. He is able to set us at liberty in Christ, and yet by the same act to bind us into the bondage of Him 'whom to serve is to reign.' He is able to make all the flying hours of inestimable and never-returning time sacred to us, and yet to take out of them all anxiety; to fill the heart with the things eternal, and yet to open to it as no other touch can do all that is truly rich and beautiful in the things of this life. He is able, in a word, having united us to Christ, to make that union 'a living, bright reality,' a possession that we use as well as have, in the whole of life. 'All these things worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.' And, meanwhile, He worketh thus as the Eyes, as the Presence, of the Lamb. All is drawn from, all is related to Christ, still to Christ, Christ glorified, Christ crucified.

'The righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified,' says Richard Hooker, in his great *Discourse of Justification*, 'is not our own; therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ has merited righteousness for as many as are found in Him. In Him God findeth us, if we be faithful; for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. . . . Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury' (perhaps, had he lived in our time, he would have added, 'or fiction, or mythology'),—'whatsoever, it is our comfort, and our wisdom. We care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned and God hath suffered; that God hath made Himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God.'

'I feel,' writes Thomas Chalmers, in his diary—and he was no dreamer in the path of this life—'I feel that looking up for the Spirit through Jesus Christ is the only effectual attitude for obtaining love to God and filial confidence in Him.' H. C. G. MOULE.

The Egyptians Dead upon the Seashore.

And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. EXODUS xiv. 30.

I. THIS is a picture, I think, of the way in which experiences in this world become finished, and men pass on to other experiences which lie beyond. In some moods it seems to us as if nothing finally got done. When we are in the thick of an experience we find it hard to believe or to imagine that the time will ever come, when that experience shall be wholly a thing of the past and we shall have gone out beyond it into other fields. When we open our eyes morning after morning and find the old struggle on which we closed our eyes last night awaiting us; when we open our door each day only to find our old enemy upon the doorstep; when all our habits and thoughts and associations have become entwined and coloured with some tyrannical necessity, which, however it may change the form of its tyranny, will never let us go,—it grows so hard as almost to appear impossible for us to anticipate that that dominion ever is to disappear, that we shall ever shake free our wings and leave behind the earth to which we have been chained so long. On the long sea-voyage the green earth becomes inconceivable. To the traveller in the mountains or the desert it becomes very difficult to believe that he shall some day reach the beach and sail upon the sea. But the day comes, nevertheless. Some morning we go out to meet the old struggle, and it is not there. Some day we listen for the old voice of our old tyrant, and the air is still. At last the day does come when our Egyptian, our old master, who has held our life in his hard hands, lies dead upon the seashore, and looking into his cold face we know that our life with him is over, and turn our eyes and our feet eastward to a journey in which he shall have no part. Things do get done, and when they do, when anything is really finished, then come serious and thoughtful moments in which we ask ourselves whether we have let that which we shall know no longer do for us all that it had the power to do, whether we are carrying out of the finished experience that which it has all along been trying to give to our characters and souls.

II. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which, both in public and personal life, men accept the permanence of conditions which are certainly some day to disappear. The whole history which teaches us that mankind does conquer its enemies and see its tyrants by-and-by lying dead on the seashore, often appears to have no influence with the minds of men, all absorbed as they are in what seems a hopeless struggle. But look around! Where are the Egyptians which used to hold the human body and the human soul in slavery? Have you ever counted? The divine right of rulers, the dominion of the priesthood over the intellect and conscience, the ownership of man by man, the accepted inequality of human lots, the complacent acquiescence in false social states, the use of torture to extort the needed lie, the praise of ignorance as the safeguard of order, the irresponsible possession of power without corresponding duty, the pure content in selfishness—do you realise, in the midst of the cynical and despairing talk by which we are surrounded, can you realise how these bad tyrants of the human race have lost their power over large regions of human life? They are dead Egyptians. Abominable social theories which fifty years ago, in the old days of slavery, in the old days of accepted pauperism, men stated as melancholy, but hopeless, truisms are now the discarded rubbish of antiquity, kept as they keep the racks and thumb-screws in old castle dungeons for a tourists' show.

Is there anything more wonderful than the way in which men to-day are daring to think of the abolition and disappearance of those things which they used to think were as truly a part of human life as the human body, or the ground on which it walks? Ah! my friends, you only show how you are living in the past, not in the present, when you see nothing but material for sport in the beliefs of ardent men and brave societies which set before themselves and human kind the abolition of poverty, the abolition of war, the abolition of ignorance, the abolition of disease, the sweeping away of mere money competition as the motive power of life, the dethronement of fear from the high place which it has held among, ay, almost above, all the ruling and shaping powers of the destiny of man. I recognise in many a frantic cry the great growing conviction of mankind that nothing which ought not to be need be. I hear in many hoarse, ungracious tones man's utterance of the conviction that much which his fathers thought was meant to cultivate their patience by submission, is meant also to cultivate their courage by resistance till it dies. 'The Egyptian must die.' That is the assurance which is possessing the heart of man.

When any evil does finally perish, then there is something infinitely pathetic in the remembrance of the way in which mankind for generations accepted it as inevitable and drew out of its submission to it such blessing and education as pure submission to the inevitable is able to bestow. The poor man, who thinks his poverty, and the ignorance and servitude which his poverty entails, all right, comforts himself by saying that God made him poor in order that he might be patient and learn to possess his soul in self-respect. By-and-bye, when the iniquity of the system under which he has lived gives way and he finds himself admitted to the full rights and duties of a man—what then? Infinitely pathetic, as it seems to me, is the recognition that he wins of the great love and wisdom with which God would not let even that darkness be entirely fruitless of light; but while He was making ready for the fuller life of which the poor man never dreamed, at the same time fed him in the wilderness with manna which the wilderness alone could give, so that no delight of freedom to which he afterwards should come need make him wholly curse or utterly despise the regions of darkness and restraint through which he came to reach it.

Is it not thus that we may always explain at least a part, the best part, of that strange longing with which the world, when it has entered into any higher life, still finds itself looking back to the lower life out of which it has passed? It is not properly regret. It is not a desire to turn back into the darkness. The age of real faith does not covet again the chains of superstition. The world at peace does not ask to be shaken once more by the earthquakes of war. But faith does feel the beauty of complete surrender which superstition kept for its sole spiritual virtue; and peace, with its diffused responsibility, is kindled at the thought of heroic and unquestioning obedience which the education of war produced. Still let superstition and war lie dead. We will not call them back to life; but we will borrow their jewels of silver and jewels of gold as we go forth into the wilderness to worship our God with larger worship. Do you not feel this in all the best progress? Do you not see it in the eyes of mankind, in the depths of the eyes of mankind always, as it turns away from the dead forms of its old masters and goes forth into the years to be; the hoarded power of the past glowing beneath the satisfaction of the present and the fiery hope of the unknown future?

III. With regard to a man's permanent escape from evil, may we not say these two things, that it must come about as the natural privilege of his life, and it must be positive? To the soul which has finally escaped from sin into the full freedom of the perfect life, the soul which has entered into the celestial liberty, must not these two things be clear, first, that his old dream of life was a delusion, that he was never meant to be the thing which he so long allowed himself to be; and, second, that the great interests of the celestial life, the service of God which has there claimed the child of God, makes sure for ever that there shall be no return to the old servitude? And what we dare to believe shall there in heaven come perfectly, and with reference to all wickedness, why may we not believe that here and now it may come in its degree with reference to some special sin? Know that it is not natural that you should steal, that you should lie; get rid of the first awful assumption that it is bound up with your constitution, cease to be a weak fatalist about it. That is the first thing. And then launch bravely forth into brave works of positive honesty and truth. Insist that your life shall not merely deny some falsehood, but that it shall assert some truth. Then, not till then, shall the lie let you go, and your soul count it impossible ever again to do—wonderful, almost incredible, that it ever should have done—what once it used to do from day to day.

When the fallacy has been exposed, when the man has become something which he used to go about declaring that it was absolutely impossible that he should ever be, or has cast finally away that which he has counted a very part and portion of his life, it is often very interesting to see how he thinks of his cast-off sin. He, if he is a true man, counts his escape complete, but he never forgets his old bondage. He is always one whom God has led 'out of the land of Egypt.' Egypt is still there, although he has escaped from it. Egypt did not cease to be when the Egyptians with whom he had to do fell dead. Men are still doing the sin which has now become impossible for him.

He understands those men by his past, while he cannot imagine himself sharing their life to-day. He is full of sympathy with the sinner, which is one with, of the same substance as, his security against the sin. Pity and hopefulness and humility and strength all blend into the peaceful and settled composure of his life.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The Magdalene's Touch.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.' S. JOHN xx. 17.

HERE we have Christ actually putting a person away, if not from His presence, yet, at least, from close contact with Him; and assigning, as the reason, a consideration of time, that the period for such contact was not yet arrived,—'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.'

The very word 'yet,' leaving the plain and blessed inference, that, when He was ascended to the Father, then she might touch Him, even as she wished. And not she only; but all His brethren: for, carrying on the word, and also the argument, to them, He says, 'But go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.'

So that, if language is to be taken in its proper sense, the date of the Ascension of Christ is the commencement of a degree of nearness to Him, and of intercourse with Him, which was impossible, or (which was the same thing) which was prohibited during the period that He was upon earth, and after His Resurrection.

And this is, itself, a wonderful fact, that we can, and may draw nigher, and cling more closely, and enjoy more really, the presence of Christ now He is in heaven, than we could have done had we seen Him, and had we met Him, as Mary did, in His material Body, in that garden.

And yet, I repeat, what else can be the natural conclusion, which every man must draw, from those words, 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father'?

I am aware that there are two interpretations sometimes given to this passage, which rather alter the signification.

Some understand the words, 'Touch Me not,' to mean, 'Hold Me not; do not detain Me'; as though our Lord's intention was to say, 'Do not keep Me now. I am only a passenger upon his way. I am mounting to the skies.'

To this view, the one, but the fatal, objection, is, that the original construction of the sentence, in the Greek, cannot carry the sense.

Others have considered the scope of the passage to belong, altogether, to a yet future state. 'Do not embrace Me thus here; hereafter, we shall be together in a different, and a glorified condition, then there will be time and opportunity for such lengthened intercourse; but, now, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father."'

To which the answer must be, as we have already seen, that our Saviour's words assuredly implied, that, as soon as ever His own ascension to heaven should have taken place, immediately, from that moment, the privilege to 'touch' Him would begin.

In order to understand the real character of the transaction, we must recollect what was the particular purport of those 'forty days' which our Saviour spent upon earth after He rose from the grave.

It was to give abundant evidence to certain chosen witnesses, that He was indeed 'risen.' It was to identify His risen with His crucified Body. It was to show that the body was at once material, and yet spiritual: material, for it ate and drank; and spiritual, for it was not subject to the usual laws of matter. It was to show that all His sympathy, and all His love, and all His interest, in His people, remained unimpaired. It was to commission His Apostles; it was to empower His Church.

But, all the while, this little circle of 'forty days' was only a halting-place in the midst of the Ascension. It was never meant for protracted converse and tender intimacies.

And, accordingly, He, who never put any one away from Him in all the thirty-three years before His death, now separated this woman from Him—'Touch Me not.'

Strange it must have sounded in her ears, 'Touch Me not,' when she, herself, had been allowed once, not unreproved only, but vindicated and commended in the act, to stay, as long as ever she liked, at those very feet, 'washing them with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head!'

But little cause had Mary for this disappointment, or mortification, when, instead, He gave her, at once, that high mission, more than all personal delight, 'Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.'

But we have to do with the warrant, which the text gives us now, that Christ is 'ascended' for real communion; and to find out what the measure of that communion is.

For, whatever it was that Mary did—whatever that action was meant to express and to convey—that may we now do and express, seeing that His own appointed time for it is already come; and that He has 'ascended to the Father.'

For, remember, that to Christ's own feeling, the circumstance of the invisibility of His presence would make no difference.

I often think that it may be so with the spirits of the departed. To them, death may make no separation at all. To us, indeed—even if we believe that they are still about us,—still the fact that we cannot see them must make a great change. But, to them, if they are still about our path, and about our bed, there will be no change, in this respect, at all—not a shadow of separation in any sense.

Certainly, our Lord feels just as much present with His people now, as when His bodily eye saw them, and His natural voice spoke to them. Therefore to Him it is just the same, now, as if anybody really 'touched' Him. But to us, it is an exercise of faith to realise that. But to Him there is no alteration at all, since He was upon the earth.

Now the act of Mary—of 'touching' Jesus—whatever that 'touch' was—must have been expressive, first, of the faith she had, that her own Lord and Saviour was again at her side, for, as she saw Him, she said simply, that one most beautiful of words, 'Master!'

Thomas, too, when he touched, felt much the same. And our Saviour's repulse to Mary speaks only and exactly the same language as does the attitude of Thomas. Both exalt the spiritual power above the natural touch. The soul's embrace of the unseen in both, is made greater than all bodily evidence. 'Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed.'

Therefore they, whose hearts can now lay hold upon Christ, and rest upon Christ, as their own dear, loving, ever-present Saviour, they are in a better and happier state than either Thomas or Mary Magdalene!

It was the action, too, of adoring love. Our Saviour's words strikingly united these two feelings, as meeting in that higher touch, to which He directly led her now.

'Touch Me,' He virtually said, 'Touch Me in your heart, when I am ascended.'

Do you say, 'Nay, but Thou wilt be too lofty then! How shall a worm, like me, touch Thee, even in a thought, when Thou art exalted to Thy glory—a King of Kings, and a Lord of Lords?'

'I am Thy brother still,' He says, 'Not a thread of fellowship will ever be broken, for "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."'

Observe how the order runs. 'First Mine; then yours. Yours, because Mine. You enter into My Sonship. Union with Me makes you His child. "My Father, and your Father, my God, and your God."'

Some persons ask, 'Can I see Christ in too much endearment? Can I go forth to Him too lovingly?'

Not if, at the same moment, you feel that He, who knocks so gently at your heart—who speaks to you with a voice so nearly audible—whose accent is so tender, that you almost hear Him pronounce your very name—is still He, to whom 'a name is given which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.'

The great secret of all love is to mingle the largest conceivable amount of affection with the greatest possible degree of veneration.

And in the Magdalene's touch, there was that clinging sense which said, 'Never go away from me. I can't bear it. I can never live without Thee. Abide with me now and for ever.'

Might not she well say that to Him, from whom such virtue had once gone out to her?

And this is exactly the language of every believer's clinging to his Saviour. 'Lord, if thou shouldest leave me, even for a moment, that moment I should die!'

But, all praise be to His grace, He cannot leave us; for it is not we who hold Him—but it is He who holds us. 'My Beloved is mine,' is a precious thought; but it is nothing to, 'And I am His.'

And, as the things of this outer world come and go, as they will; and all change, and all die,—I marvel, if you will not find, presently, that the things you 'touch,' and cannot see, are far more real, and far better, than all that ever the natural senses know.

I cannot but trace in our Saviour's words to Mary, a thought, that was always characteristic of Him, all His life—a holy jealousy for the glory of the Father. Whatever is given to Christ, separate from the Father, Christ will put away.

If Christ has your love, so must the Father. You may not 'touch Him, unless that 'touch' embraces the Father—for they are one. One in being—one in their infinite love to sinners. 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.'

'But, is not God always calling us away from the passive, to the active? from the personal enjoyment of our religion, to the communication of that religion to others?

To feel the presence of Christ, even as a thing tangible to the soul, is a great and precious thing—but you have still a higher privilege and a nearer duty.

Go, and tell others that there is a brotherhood, which you have felt. Tell them, that Christ is gone up on high, to be a great uniting principle, that shall bind together the family of a man. Tell them of the peace and joy of every united soul; of the love which should cement together all who are 'one in Christ Jesus.' Tell the poorest sinners that you meet, that they may be 'brethren' still. Tell the brethren, that, in the one common Father, through the one common Saviour, all divisions must cease; and nothing must come in to break the symmetry of the beautiful 'body of Christ.' Tell all that we are brothers and sisters; and that through 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all,' we are going to one home—to the one glory of the one great God.

For if Mary's place is yours, so is Mary's mission yours.

'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Job's Prophecy of the Resurrection.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Job xix. 25, 26.

I NEED scarcely stay to prove to you that in these most remarkable words the Patriarch Job is speaking of the Resurrection. Although we are unable to assign with historical certainty the precise period at which Job lived, there is strong reason for concluding that he was contemporary with Moses. And there is this great point of interest connected with him, that he was not an Israelite. He was not a Hebrew, but a Gentile. Then further, he was not only a man of great earthly distinction, for he is described as 'the greatest of all the men of the East'; but he was also 'a perfect and an upright man,' and one that 'feared God, and eschewed evil.' He was thus like Melchisedec, a representative of the pure religion of the primitive ages of the world. He was a priest and a prophet, not for one inconsiderable nation, but for the universal family of man. And it is certainly an interesting and providential circumstance, that there should exist side by side with the Pentateuch a book like this, which, describing the state of the world without the pale of the Jewish Church, should so entirely harmonise with it, and with all the primeval revelations of God to man.

But let us examine carefully and reverently the whole prophecy of which the text is the central point. The Patriarch is here, as I said just now, comforting himself with the hope of the Resurrection, and of the life of the world to come. It was not always so with him. His earthly comforts had failed him. He had lost his property and his children. He had been tempted by his wife, and mocked by his friends. Under these trying circumstances he seems to have experienced those alternations to which even the best of men are liable. In an earlier part of this book, he seems anxiously to inquire into the possibility of a man's living again. 'Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?' And again; 'If a man die, shall he live again?' But here, in this passage, all doubt vanishes. After a severe struggle of anguish and agony, he arose from his deep dejection, and poured forth these magnificent words—doubtless under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit—words of which he may not himself have then seen all the significance and force; but words upon which the Gospel of Jesus, and the great event which we commemorate this day, shed their full flood of heavenly light and meaning. Far across the space of fifteen centuries this prophecy reaches to our Lord's empty tomb, and onwards, and still onwards to the resurrection of all men at the last great day.

I. Let us examine the words a little more in detail.

The Patriarch looked upon his own death as then close at hand; but he was anxious that what he was about to communicate should not perish with him. And since the thoughts to which he was now about to give utterance had been comforting to himself, he desires that they might become a permanent record for the comfort of others. He desires that these precious words might be committed to writing. But ink might fade, and parchment might decay. And, therefore, he prays that his words might be engraven in the hard stone, and then that the letters might be filled in with molten lead. He would have these memorable words so fixed and imprinted that they might never be effaced for ever. And the Patriarch's wish has been granted; his words have been fixed in the imperishable record of Holy Scripture, graven on the solid rock of God's Word, which shall never pass away.

'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' That is, I, Job, who am thus grievously afflicted, I am fully persuaded that my Redeemer is living. Yes; the Lord Jesus who is from everlasting to everlasting was living then. 'He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.' He is a living Person; not an inanimate thing. Nor is He only a man. No mere man can redeem His brother. 'It cost more than that to redeem our souls, so that we must let that alone for ever.'

Nor is He only an angel; for God 'charges His angels with folly.' The word *Goel*, here translated Redeemer, means one next of kin. And so Christ Jesus is our true Goel, having made Himself next of kin to us all by taking our nature upon Him: and He has redeemed us from the captivity of sin and Satan; and has purchased us by the price of His most precious Blood. And He liveth; He died and rose again; and behold, He liveth for evermore. He is the true vindicating kinsman. And thus Job expresses his firm confidence, that amidst all failures of issue or kindred, all decay and ruin of his earthly tenement, he had yet a Goel, an Avenger living, one who to quicken him to everlasting life would stand clothed in his own flesh and blood triumphant over the dust; and in whom and through whom he should himself see God. The description of the Redeemer 'established above the dust' represents Him as coming with His Resurrection power, to reanimate the dust of millions on millions, and to judge the quick and the dead.

But, perhaps, you are tempted to ask, 'How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?' You admit the truth of the Resurrection, but you inquire as to the nature of the risen body. Will it be that very body in which I have lived and acted my part here on earth? Or, will it be a body so unearthly, so etherealised, as scarcely to be distinguished from spirit? Nay, but if it is such a body, then it will not be the same; for how can it be a real resurrection if the flesh is not the same? It must be capable of being identified. It cannot be a true resurrection unless that which rises is the same as that which has died. See how the Patriarch expresses it, 'Yet in my flesh'—yes; in that flesh which has been destroyed—which has been resolved into its elementary invisible atoms—which has been wrought up, over and over again, it may be, into other substances—in that flesh again gathered together—in that very flesh, risen again, 'I shall see God.' No doubtful meaning of the words, no ambiguity of expression can avail to sponge out from this passage the mighty doctrine which the Church proclaims with a voice as of a trumpet this day. If we believe that our Redeemer lives—that He has been established above the dust—then we know that His Resurrection involves the resurrection of all men; and that the faithful, though their bodies must for a time yield to the power of death, shall at the last day be quickened, and that their very eyes, and no stranger's eyes rather than theirs, shall gaze upon God.

Now if this be indeed so; if it be true that as certainly as that we are gathered together in this cathedral this morning, so certainly shall we appear in these very bodies before the Judgment Throne, how careful ought we to be, lest we dishonour our bodies, by making them the instruments of sin. Let us respect our bodies as the temples in which the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to dwell. Let us cease to think that after death we have done with our bodies. The body—a changed body I grant you, because a spiritual and an immortal body—but still the body—the body which has had its part to fulfil on earth—the body no less than the soul has its position to fill throughout eternity. Oh, then let us strive in the power of our risen Lord to live the Resurrection life. Let our hearts be now in heaven, where we hope our bodies shall be hereafter; through Him who as on this day rose from the dead, and 'is become the firstfruits of them that are asleep.' BISHOP BICKERSTETH.

Reasons for Easter Joy.

Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. PSALM XXX. 11.

HERE is described the change, complete and more or less sudden, from sadness to joy. David has escaped the danger which had brought him very near to death, and now he is thankful and exultant. His words are in keeping with what Christians feel as they pass from the last days of the Holy Week into the first hours of Easter. If Easter is associated predominantly with any one emotion of the human soul, it is with that of joy. When Mary Magdalene and the other Marys had heard the words of the angel of the Lord, 'they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.' When on the evening of Easter Day Jesus stood in the midst of the assembled disciples and showed them His wounded hands and feet, their joy was too great for the steady exercise of their understandings; 'they believed not for joy, and wondered.' In those first hours of ecstatic bewilderment, as S. John says, 'the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.' Was it not His own promise of a joy which would be beyond the power of any outward circumstance that had now become true? 'Verily, verily, I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice'—that was the hour of Calvary—'and ye shall be sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy'—that was to be the radiance of Easter. 'A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now, therefore, have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' And thus, ever since the Church of Christ has laboured to make Easter festival, beyond all others, the feast of Christian joy, all that nature and all that art could furnish has been summoned to express, so far as outward things may, this overmastering emotion of Christian souls worshipping at the tomb of the risen Christ. All the deliverances of God's ancient people from Egypt, from Assyria, from Babylon, are but the rehearsals of the great deliverance of all on the Resurrection morning; and each prophet and each psalmist that heralds any one of them sounds in Christian ears some separate note of the Resurrection hymn, 'Sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously'; or, 'He hath broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder'; or, 'The Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and like a giant refreshed with wine'; or, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it'; these and a hundred other passages had an original place and reference in Jewish history; and yet they were felt to receive their highest interpretation and fulfilment when they were uttered by Christian hearts on the Easter festival. And the joy which fills the soul of the believing Church on Easter Day has some sort of echo in the world outside, so that they who sit loosely to our faith and hope, and who worship rarely if ever before our altars, yet feel that good spirits are somehow in order on Easter morning. For their sakes, as for our own, let us try to take this emotion to pieces as we find it in a Christian soul. Let us ask why it is so natural for Christians to say this day with David, 'Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.'

I. The first reason, then, for this Easter joy is the triumph and satisfaction which is enjoyed by our Lord Himself. Certainly it is now more than 1800 years ago since He died and rose; but we Christians are well assured that He is alive, that He is reigning on His throne in heaven, yet also invisibly present with us on earth, and perfectly well aware of all that is passing both within our souls and without them. Yes, eighteen centuries are gone, yet year by year we follow Him step by step through the stages of His suffering and death. We sympathise reverently with the awful sorrows of our adorable Lord and friend; and thus we can enter, too, in some far-off way into the sense of triumph, unspeakable and sublime, which followed. It is His triumph, that is the first consideration—His triumph who was but now so cruelly insulted and tortured; His whom they buffeted and spat upon and mocked and derided and nailed to the wood and laid in the sepulchre. It is all over now. His enemies have done their best or their worst, and He has swept it all aside as by a single motion of His majestic will. He is risen. And we as we kneel before Him think first of all of Him; it is His joy which inspires ours, which turns our heaviness into joy, which puts off our sackcloth and girds us with gladness. I say this is the case; and perhaps it were more prudent to say that it ought to be. For in truth their habit of getting out of and forgetting our miserable selves in the absorbing sense of the beauty and magnificence of God belongs rather, as it seems to me, to ancient than to modern Christianity. Few things are more striking in the early Christian mind, taken as a whole, than its power, its magnificent power of escaping from self in the presence of the thought of God. To those old Christians God was all; man was nothing, or wellnigh nothing. They delighted to dwell on everything that God had told them about Himself, upon each one of His attributes, upon each one of His acts, simply because it was His, and without reference to the question whether it had any or what bearing on their lives and needs. There was a disinterested interest in God, and to them our Lord's Resurrection was in the first place an event of commanding moment, because it meant His glory and triumph, whatever else it might mean for them. With us moderns, I apprehend, the case is somewhat otherwise. We value God, if the truth must be spoken, at least in many cases, not for His own sake, but for ours. Perhaps without knowing it we have drunk deeply into the subjective temper, as it is called, of our time, that temper which assumes that truth only exists so far as we can measure it, or as it exists for us; that temper which practically, like the old sophist in Plato, makes man the measure of all things. With us to-day it is too often assumed that the human mind is the centre not merely of human thought but of universal being; and thus God, the one self-existent cause of all that is, is banished to a distant point in the circumference of our petty imaginary universe. And men carry this temper unconsciously into their religion; and thus our first question too often, in presence of a great truth like the Resurrection, is not, What is its intrinsic importance? but, What interest has it for me?

Look at a modern hymn: it is, as a rule, full of man, full of his wants, of his aspirations, of his anticipations, of his hopes, of his fears, full of his religious self, if you will, but still full of self. But read an ancient hymn: it is, as a rule, full of God, of His awful nature, of His wonderful attributes; it is full of the Eternal Son, of His acts, of His sufferings, of His triumphs, of His majesty. Certainly, ancient Christianity, it too did justice to the needs and moods of the soul; just as in the Psalms we find the soul's separate moods of hope and fear, of penitence and exultation, so abundantly provided for; but we often hear even religious people express something like impatience with the great psalms which describe God's relations with nature or God's dealings with His people Israel, an impatience which is grounded on the fact that they think those Psalms only of real interest which enable them to say something to God about themselves. Surely, we moderns have lost something, nay, I will dare to say we have lost much, in this respect, by comparison with the men of the early Church: and I may thus have said too much when I took it so easily for granted that the joy of our Lord would be our first reason for rejoicing on Easter Day. Be it yours to show that my misgiving was unwarranted. You know that the power of sympathy with an earthly friend's happiness leaves altogether out of consideration the petty question whether that happiness contributes anything to your own; and in like manner do you endeavour to say to-day to your heavenly friend, 'It is because Thou, O Lord Jesus, hast vanquished Thine enemies, hast overcome death, hast entered into Thy glory, that Thou hast turned my lengthened heaviness into joy, and hast put off my sackcloth, and hast girded me with gladness.'

II. And having remarked this let us note, secondly, that Easter joy is inspired by the sense of confidence with which Christ's Resurrection from the dead invigorates our grasp of Christian truth. The understanding has its joys no less than the heart, and a keen sense of intellectual joy is experienced when we receive a truth, or any part of it, on a secure basis. This is what the old Roman poet meant by saying that the man was really happy who had attained to know the causes of things; and no one who has been thrown into close relations with men who are employed in the eager pursuit of any one branch of knowledge can mistake the depth and the reality of this kind of satisfaction. The chemist who has at last explained the known effect of a familiar drug by laying bare upon analysis a hitherto undiscovered property in it; the historian who has been enabled to show that what has been his conjecture for years rests on the evidence of a trustworthy document; the mathematician on whom has flashed the formula which solves some problem that has long haunted and has long eluded him; the anatomist who has been able to refer what he had hitherto regarded as an abnormal occurrence to the operation of a recognised law; these men know what joy is, the joy of the understanding when it comes into full contact with some truth underlying that truth which it has hitherto grasped. Now, akin to this kind of joy is the satisfaction of a Christian understanding when he steadily dwells on the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through large tracts of time we Christians think mainly, and quite naturally, of truths and of duty which, however important, are not the foundations of other truths. The Christian creed is like a tower which rears high towards heaven its windows and its pinnacles in stages of ever-increasing gracefulness, and we launch our admiration first on one detail of it and then on another; we dwell continuously, so to put it, in the upper air during this process of study and of admiration, till at last, perhaps, a grave question occurs, or is suggested to us, What does it all rest upon? What is the foundation fact on which this structure has been reared in all its audacious and fascinating beauty? What is the fact—if there be any such fact—the removal of which would be at once fatal to the edifice? And the answer is, that our Lord's Resurrection from the dead is such a fact: it is the foundation on which all that is distinctively Christian, and not merely theistic, truth in the Christian creed really rests. Our Lord pointed to it as the certificate of His mission. He rebuked, indeed, the temper which made man ask whether He could show a sign of having a mission from above; but He granted the request. The prophet Jonah was the type of the Son of Man; and as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of Man to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And the earliest sermons of the Apostles were almost entirely concerned with Christ's Resurrection. As we read them in the Acts, it might seem that there was no Christian doctrine but that of the Resurrection. The prophecies which it fulfilled, the consequences to which it pointed, above all, the reality of the fact itself of which they, the preachers of the time were personal witnesses, this was the substance of the preaching of the Apostles of Christ. And why did they dwell so persistently on the Resurrection, instead of saying more about our Lord's atoning death or about the power of His example, or about the drift and character of His moral teaching, or about the means of grace with which He had endowed His Church? Why, but because before building the superstructure in the hearts of believers it was necessary to lay the foundation deep and firm. If it was true that Christ had risen, then the faith of Christendom in all its vast significance would be seen step by step, but most surely to follow; whereas 'if Christ be not risen'—it was one of themselves who wrote it—'then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'

Yes, you say; but is it certain that He did rise? It is as certain as any historical fact well can be. It is certain, first of all, that His death was not a mere trance, that He really died. The wonder is, physically speaking, after all that He had previously undergone, that He should have lived so long upon the Cross as He did. The soldier's lance which drew from His side the blood which remained in His heart, together with the water of the pericardium, would of itself have caused death. Before His Body was taken down from the Cross Pilate satisfied himself that He was really dead; and when His Body was taken down it was embalmed; that is to say, it was wrapped tightly round with spiced cloths, by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, an operation which of itself would have produced suffocation. The Jews who have denied His Resurrection have never denied that He really died. When they took the precaution of sealing the stone and setting a watch, they had no doubt that that sepulchre enclosed a dead body; they only professed to fear some trick on the part of the disciples. Did the disciples then take the body stealthily out of the sepulchre? They would not have even dared to attempt it. In those days before Pentecost they were notoriously wanting in courage. Had they not forsaken Him and fled when their Master was apprehended? Did not Peter who followed him afar off shrink from confessing himself His disciple? Was not S. John alone of them all on Calvary? During the days which followed, did they not keep in strict seclusion for fear of the Jews? When Jesus, after His Resurrection, appeared, did they not take Him for a ghost? Were they not seized with terror at the very sight of Him? No; the disciples were not then the men who would have dared to steal the Body of Christ. But if they had had the necessary courage, would they have had the will? Why should they have thought of it? Once convinced that He was dead, they would have regarded Him either as a weak but honest fanatic, or as an impostor to whose influence they had too readily yielded. What was to be gained by trying to persuade men that He had really risen, if, within their knowledge, He had to be removed from His grave, if at all, by human hands? How could the disciples hope, if they embarked in such an enterprise as this, to deceive a sharp-witted people like the Jews, to escape the condign punishment which would follow on their detection, much more to gain the ear of the world? Could they be sufficiently sure of each other? Would not some one of the eleven have turned informer? Is not the supposition of a simultaneous determination of eleven persons to carry out such a design as this utterly opposed to all probability? No; had they dared, they would not have wished to remove the body from the sepulchre. But had they wished to do so, could they have succeeded? The tomb was guarded by soldiers; it was sealed and made sure; the disciples must have been surprised in the attempt. Certainly the guards were bribed to give currency to a report that the disciples had made the attempt and succeeded; but the Jews themselves never believed the story. When they imprisoned and scourged S. Peter and S. John; when they stoned S. Stephen; when they persuaded Herod to kill S. James, the brother of S. John, with the sword, they never accused the Apostles of having rifled the sepulchre, of having stolen the Body of Jesus. The crime of the Apostles was that they would continue to preach the Resurrection after being inhibited by the Jewish authorities. If, then, Jesus, after being laid in His grave dead, did appear alive, and conversed with His Apostles, surely He must have risen (and that He should rise is attested positively by His Apostles); they affirmed that 'He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.' They did all that men could do to show the robustness of their conviction; they gave their lives in attestation of it.

And there are two facts among others which seem to me to be specially deserving of attention in this connection. One is the appearance of our Lord to five hundred Christians at one time, which is mentioned by S. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, the greater part of whom, he says, were still surviving when he wrote the epistle. No one has presumed to suggest that S. Paul did not write these words. They occur, it so happens, in one of the four epistles which the most destructive of modern critical schools has not ventured to call in question. No one has pleaded that in matters of fact S. Paul cannot be trusted. Apart from his character he shows his transparent veracity in every page of his writings. S. Paul then, let us observe, knew of more than two hundred and fifty living people who had seen our Lord at one time, and he told the Corinthians so. There was plenty of intercourse between Corinth and Palestine; the Corinthians then had opportunities of testing this assertion independently for themselves, and there is no evidence whatever of their having questioned its accuracy. And the other fact is the conversion of three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost. Certainly the critics who raise no question as to the First Epistle to the Corinthians would not be equally silent about the Acts. But a statement of this kind lies outside the scope of their assaults upon the book. We have no reason then in the world for doubting that three thousand people were converted by a sermon of S. Peter's which turned entirely on the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now reflect that when this sermon, with its remarkable consequences took place, only seven weeks had elapsed since the Resurrection itself. The sermon was preached, and the conversions were made, not in a distant province of the Roman empire, but in Jerusalem itself—that is to say, on the very scene of the Passion and the Resurrection. Why should the converts have taken S. Peter's word for it unless the matter had been often discussed beforehand, and it was felt that there was no room for serious question? The converts were within a short walk of the spot; they could visit the tomb each one of them; they could question the guards, they could question the Jews, they could weigh what was advanced by the Apostles against what was advanced by the Jews. If they were deceived, it certainly was not that they had not precautions enough close at hand against deception. No man—observe this—could become a Christian without faith in the Resurrection. Every Christian as such was a witness to the true Resurrection, and within a few weeks of the event and on the spot where it had occurred, there was a church of some eight thousand persons asserting and reasserting, at the hazard of their lives, that there was no doubt whatever that Christ had risen.

Ah! you remark, nobody saw Him come out of His grave. Whether the guards did see Him or not we cannot say, but if a whole legion of soldiers had seen Him they would have been just as terrified as were the guards. Our Lord did not wish to terrify the disciples. He rose first and then appeared to them, and even then it was difficult for them to conquer the dread with which they had viewed Him. But why, you say, did He not show Himself to the Jews, to Annas, to Caiaphas, to Pilate, to the great magistrates, to the influential rabbis? So sneered the Pagan Celsus sixteen centuries ago, and the taunt is repeated by the unbelief of our day. But if the objection is reasonable, it is a reason against the whole plan of converting the world which has actually been followed. Instead of ascending into heaven after bidding His disciples go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, our Lord ought, it seems, to have remained on earth, and to have done the work Himself; He ought to have appeared in person to all the nations whose conversion He desired. And if His appearance was not enough, and men should be sceptical as to whether He had ever died, He ought (for this is what the objection would seem to require) to have died again and have risen again and again for the benefit of each new group of sceptics. No, this is not, it never has been, God's way of dealing with mankind. He gives evidence enough for a reasonable faith; He does not multiply proofs of what is proved sufficiently for those who wish to ascertain the truth, and who have no moral reasons for rejecting it. Our Lord had said that men who did not believe Moses and the prophets would 'not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' When He rose Himself, He would not increase the guilt of those who disbelieved His accredited witnesses, and who most assuredly would have discovered some new reason for disbelieving the evidence of their own senses if He had personally appeared to them. And as to the differences of the reports of the Resurrection in the Gospels they are just of such a character as might be expected in four perfectly honest writers reporting the same event at different times, and from different points of view. These differences are very far from being irreconcilable; but they show, meanwhile, that the sacred writers recorded what they knew independently of each other, and without any sort of design to produce the effect of an harmonious narrative. If each evangelist had reported in the same words the account of some witness who declared that he saw our Lord come forth from the sepulchre, there would have been real reasons for an adverse criticism, which do not exist in the existing narratives.

Here, then, in the Resurrection of Christ, we have, I dare to say, a solid fact on which the Christian faith securely rests, both as a whole and in its most vital parts. Does our Lord say that hereafter we 'shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven'? If the speaker were a Being whose life was conditioned as our own, such language could at best be regarded as an extravagant illusion, but if He really rose from the dead, He evidently is a Being of another order than we, and this and very much more is reasonably possible. Does He speak of giving His life as ransom for many, of His Blood being shed for the remission of sins? This, again, would be unintelligible or intolerable for an ordinary man; but it is clear that the death of one who rose three days after His life had been wrung out of Him by a death of torture, may well have consequences like these beyond our calculations. Does He say that He and the Father are one thing, that to have seen Him is to have seen the Father, that all men should honour the Son, that is, Himself, even as they honour the Father, that unless men would eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, they would have no life in them? Ah, what must have been the verdict of the human reason and conscience upon such language as this, if the speaker after an ignominious execution had rotted in His grave? Whereas, in view of the considerations which we have had before us, the Apostle exclaims that Christ was declared to be 'the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead.' Yes, it is here, beside the tomb, the empty tomb of the risen Jesus, that Christian faith feels itself to be touching the hard rock of fact. Here we break through the tyranny of matter and sense, and we rise with Christ into the immaterial world. Here we put a term to the enervating alternations of guesses and of doubts which prevail outside, and we reach to the frontier at least of the absolutely certain. Here, as we kneel in deep thankfulness, and the Christian creed in all its beauty, and in all its strength and coherent truth, opens out article after article before us, we hear, it may be, His voice as did the beloved Apostle from heaven, 'I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.' We can but answer, 'Truly, Lord Jesus, Thou, by Thy Resurrection, hast turned my mental heaviness into joy, Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.'

III. But there is a third and last reason for Easter joy, which must be briefly touched on before we close. As a man gets on in life he finds his deepest human interests transferred one after another to a sphere which is beyond that of sense and time; one after another they are withdrawn; the friends of our childhood, the friends of our manhood, the friends of our riper years, one after another they reach the river's brink. There is hesitation, it may be; perhaps for the moment it seems as if they might return; but the hour strikes and they part from us. Some such we cannot but call to mind to-day who were here with us last Easter, and even at our last festival, in this cathedral. Yes, all here remains as it was, at least for a while; the houses in which they dwelt, the haunts they frequented, the enterprises in which they were engaged, the faces which they loved—all these remain, but *they*—they are gone; they have disappeared beyond recall; their bodies, indeed, we know lie beneath the sod, a prey to corruption and the worm, but their souls, their spirits, themselves, that which flashed through the eye, that which was felt in the manner, in the tone of the voice as well as in the thought and in the action, where is it now? Has it then become absorbed into some sea of life in which all personality, and with it all consciousness, has perished? Has it sunk back after a momentary flicker into an abyss of nothing now that the material framework, whose energy it was, is withdrawn? I will not here review the arguments by which wise and good men living in Pagan darkness, but making the most of such light as reason and conscience could give them, have attained to some belief in the immortality of the soul. We know that they are guess or speculation, whichever we deem it; we Christians know that it is a solemn certainty, but we know also this, that it is only half the truth. Man is not merely a spiritual being; he is also an animal organism, and if his spiritual part were to be isolated for eternity, wrenched away for ever from the senses, and from the framework in which it has been lodged since the first moment of its existence, man would be no longer the same being; he would be unrecognisable, even by himself, for the spirit strikes its roots deep into the animal organism. This intimate relation between the two is the one element of truth on which materialism fixes, in order that it may thence infer its degrading falsehood that man has no spiritual being at all. And thus it is that when the Gospel brought life and immortality to light it did this thoroughly, it unveiled the immortality of man in his completeness, the immortality of his spiritualised but still existing body, as well as the immortality of his soul. Yes, we may hope to meet our friends, those 'whom we have loved long since and lost a while,' not as formless, unrecognisable shades, but with the features, with the expression which they wore on earth ; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, 'even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.' His Resurrection is a model, as it is the warrant of our own. Nay, all men shall rise again with their bodies, that they may give account of their works. In that future world there will no doubt be shadows, dark, impenetrable, unchanging, but there will also be joy unchangeable and full of glory. And if they whom we call the dead know anything of what is passing here on earth; if, as has been supposed by great Christian thinkers, they see in the eternal world, as in a mirror, the reflection of all that happens in that world of sense from which they have been separated by death, then we may believe that this Easter festival is for them, too, in whatever sense, a measure and an occasion of rejoicing, and that the happiness of the Church on earth is responded to from beyond the veil. To them, at any rate, our thoughts involuntarily turn in these our moments of rare and thankful joy. They live again now in our memories, though years should have passed since they were withdrawn from our sight; and as we look forward to the hour when we, unworthy, though repentant, through redeeming grace and mercy, shall join them, and beneath the throne of our risen Lord, shall again behold those features which we have loved best of all on earth, can we but exclaim with deep thankfulness, 'Thou, O Jesus, hast by Thy Resurrection turned this my heaviness into joy; Thou has just put off my sackcloth; Thou hast girded me with gladness.'

H. P. LIDDON.

Life's Enigmas in the Light of Easter.

For with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light shall we see light.
PSALM xxxvi. 9.

NO one sermon can ever touch on the many-sided import of Easter, still less exhaust any single element of its infinite meaning. We can but select some one of its suggestions, whichever may seem to us most congruous for the occasion, and be content with such brief treatment of it as alone is possible on Easter Day.

To-day I ask you to consider the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection —which is, of course, the essential message of Easter Day—as involving some interpretation, or, if not interpretation, the postponement and relegation to another sphere of our existence, of some of life's darkest and dreariest enigmas.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

I. Consider, first, the light which Easter sheds on man's most apparently absolute failures. Alas! if we wish to seek for instances of failure, we need not look further than our own hearts. How many might say with the hero of Sir Walter Scott: 'And this is the progress and issue of human wishes! Nursed by the merest trifles, they are first kindled by fancy, nay, are fed upon the fever of hope, till they consume the substance which they inflame, and man and his hopes and passions and desires sink into a worthless heap of embers and ashes.' But we will take no ordinary, no everyday, no common failure, but take failure at its seeming worst, and most final, take it at the apparently ultimate stage of miserable suicide.

We know the merciful and almost universal legal fiction—for it is a fiction and nothing else—by which every *felo de se* is brought in as of unsound mind or while temporarily deranged, and most true it is, that this frail barque of ours, when sorely tried, may wreck itself without the captain's guilt, without the pilot's knowledge, but also most true it is that many have found life so weary, so empty, so desolate, that they have by their own perfectly willing act, I will not say rushed with rude haste into the presence of their God, but rather have flung down their lives at His footstool in uttermost despair. Have you imagination, have you unselfishness enough to realise that awful and utter shipwreck of that which is so divinely precious, this flinging away of our eternal jewel into the miry slush of the enemy of our souls, this extinction in foul pistol smoke or deadly drugs of the breath of life which God breathed into our nostrils? There used to be at Paris a terrible little Doric building called 'The Morgue,' to which were daily conveyed the bodies of those hapless self-murderers who had been found the previous night in the river Seine. That great poet and deepest teacher of our age, Mr. Robert Browning, describes a visit which he paid to that house of death, of which the ghastly sombreness has also been portrayed by a French poet. He whose imaginative pencil drew that demon figure, the wonderful representation of the cruelty and sensuality of great cities which glares down, as though in triumph, from the corner of the summit of Notre Dame, was well fitted to reveal the sentiments of gloom and terror which hung about the Morgue, but he leaves its horror in all its horribleness unexplained without a gleam of hope. There are the two Paris working men carrying the naked body of the suicide, with his hanging arm and streaming hair, met by his agony-stricken wife and weeping child; the dull, curious crowd of squalid artisans are looking on indifferently, seated on a low wall. 'There it is,' he says, 'it is not my business to explain—make what you can of it.' There is the fact as seen without the light of religion. Not so our English poet. He tells us that he visited the

Morgue just before it was done away with, and saw in it the corpses of three men who had found life most intolerable the day before. Each lay on his copper couch; each coat and hat dripped by the owner's bed. It seemed to the kindly poet's heart as if one, a mere boy, had been maddened by the dreams of ambition and their inevitable disappointment; the next was a young Socialist, his fist still fiercely clenched as though in defiance of the tyranny of death itself; and the third had plunged into gambling and drink and dissipation, and met with their inevitable retribution. And this was the end of it all, of all their mortal lives: that copper couch, and the water dripping over them, and the eyes closed in the darkness of irrevocable death. And as he gazed at them, the first natural thought which passed through his mind was the awful certainty of the world's universal experience—'the wages of sin is death,' that even on the lowest, poorest, most prosaic calculation of mere advantage,

> 'It's wiser being good than bad,
> It's safer being meek than fierce,
> It's fitter being sane than mad.'

But he does not stop at that eternally-forgotten commonplace. He refuses to give up those poor dead wretches, in spite of the horrible failure of their lives; no, he thinks, 'poor men God made, and all for this!' and with a holy confidence, a mercy which is surely Christlike, he dares even to follow them into the future. He says: 'I thought, and think, their sins atoned.' Death does not end all, it does not extinguish the hope which for any one of us renders life tolerable to bear.

II. Take another and opposite form of apparently hopeless failure —the frightful apparent failure of goodness, of sanctity on earth as seen in the Baal-fires of martyrdom. How could we contemplate the Cross save in the light of the Resurrection? How could we contemplate, save in the light of Easter, the persecutions, the miseries of the noblest of all the human race—in proportion to their nobleness—the greatest and sweetest of all the things of God? Only think of it! Think of S. Stephen, under the heaped stones in anguish lying, the light of his angel-face quenched in blood, and priests and Pharisees gnashing on him with their teeth; think of S. Paul, lowly, deserted, aged, sick, imprisoned, slain—and slain by a Nero, and slain with a reckless indifference, as if all his immeasurable services to mankind had only fallen like an unnoticed rain-drop into the oblivious ocean of man's neglect; think of Savonarola pelted by wretched boys in the streets of his own Florence, spat at, execrated, hung in chains, suffering slow death, that God-gifted voice choked by Borgias; think of Tyndale, to whom we owe the priceless boon of our English Bible, burnt by the orders of such a man as Henry VIII.; think of our English martyrs, burnt for the truth of the Reformation, and burnt apparently in vain. Think of all those and unnumbered more. The great German poet Goethe said: 'Whenever you have a great soul fearlessly uttering truth, there you have Calvary again.' And something seems to have been wanting in a great saint's career if he has not died by the violent hatred of the world. 'The progress of the world's best truths,' as the American orator truly said, 'has been from scaffold to scaffold and from stake to stake'; and, if we consider how that great majority of God's children have exhibited, from Noah to Whitefield, the art of doing right and suffering for it, and that every life must take up its cross—which, as has been truly said, does not mean having ovations at dinner-parties and being put over every one else's head—we feel forced to ask, 'Is it so? Is it in vain that the highest suffer loss?' The answer is not merely 'I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now,' but to point to Christ's Cross, to Christ's empty, angel-haunted tomb. If Christ thus suffered 'the just for the unjust'—Christ the sinless, Christ the innocent, Christ the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—must the servant be better off than the Master? Must not the servant, too, if he be a true servant, be purified by pain?

III. And, as Easter Day thus sheds a gleam over tragedies and failures and martyrdoms, it also helps us to keep the homely, everyday path of life. 'I dwelt,' says a writer, 'on the conviction that I was insignificant, that there was nothing much in me, and it was this that destroyed my peace. We can reconcile ourselves to poverty and suffering, but few of us can endure the conviction that there is nothing in us, nothing to admire, nothing that anybody should care for. It is a bitter experience, and yet there is consolation. The universe is infinite, I sought refuge in the idea of God, and the starry night with its incomprehensible distances, before which nothing of man could ever be great, and I was at peace.' There is a far better way of finding peace than this. God's immensity, even as seen in the daisy, might make a man doubt his inch-high difference from his fellows; but Christ revealed to us what gives a new meaning to the immensity of God, which, while it annihilates all vain accidental earthly differences, still assures the individuality of man, and that 'not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father.' When Christ said that, He uttered the last sermon of hope and consolation, and He added to that word an infinitude of meaning when, by conquering death, He opened to us the gates of life beyond life, and that life everlasting.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

EASTER DAY

Voices of the Spring.

Thou renewest the face of the earth. Psalm civ. 30.

I. THE first voice we hear speaks directly for God—for the divine existence and presence with us in His works. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Nature says in her heart, and in every colour and feature of her flushing face, 'There is a God, and He is here!'

If any one shall say that all the beauty and abundance of the natural world is no proof to him that there is a God, and that a whole earth awakening into new life is just as little proof as the earth lying dead in winter, that in either case you have only 'phenomena,' and that his mind cannot rise above phenomena or look in any way beyond them, I do not know that you can reason to much effect with such a man. Nearly all you can say is just this, 'My mind is not constituted as your mind. I must believe that these grand effects have a still grander cause; I must believe that a living spring is a voice from the living God.'

II. The spring has not only this loud and general voice as to God's existence and presence with us, it utters something more exact and definite as to His attributes and ways. Does it not, for instance, sing a clear song of the divine faithfulness?

All who know God know that His covenant of providence as well as of grace standeth sure. If the providential covenant were broken, the gracious one could not be fulfilled. But there is no sign of any breach anywhere. 'Great is His faithfulness.' The lengthening days are telling it, the birds are singing it, the flowers are blooming it, the whole earth is quick with it, and it breathes abroad in the balmy air.

III. There is another of the voices of the season. It tells us clearly and constantly, and every day with louder voice, of God's great goodness. He brings the spring not merely because He is faithful, but still more because He is good. It is not merely that He made a certain promise four thousand years ago and must keep it, it is that He made the promise and loves to keep it. When He made it He knew that He would love to keep it.

IV. As we speak thus of freshness and beauty, we seem to hear another voice of the season telling us softly and melodiously of divine tenderness.

Autumn declares, with perhaps still fuller voice than the spring, the divine goodness, but it does not speak so much of God's tenderness. God takes this season of the year to tell us especially what tenderness, what delicacy, what colourings of exquisite beauty there are in His nature. Did God raise with His own hand that flower on its stem, with all those rich minglings of colour? Then He must love beauty. Did He call out in the grass and in the buds and flowers that exceeding delicacy of texture, that softness almost ethereal, which will vanish if you touch it, which seems to quiver almost if you draw near? Then God must be very tender Himself.

V. It has a voice of good cheer to all who are serving God faithfully, and seeking good ends for themselves or for others, although as yet with little apparent result. For when does it come? Immediately after the winter. The darkest, bleakest, deadest season of all the year is followed by the freshest and most reviving, as if to show us every year anew that nothing is impossible with God. Sometimes the reign of winter is protracted, and the earth lies torpid and still beyond the time when she usually awakes. Then the spring comes rapidly. The frost breaks up, the wind shifts round to the south, the showers fall, and, amid the glints of the sunshine, the imprisoned vegetation rushes out on the sight. Almost every year there are some few days together when there is this clear triumphant passing from the one season to the other. In such a time each day is like a joyous trumpet-cry, 'Winter is dying—winter is dead! Summer is coming: the spring is here!'

'Lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.' Our God cannot forget, cannot forsake. He needs the winter for souls to prepare for the spring, but He never forgets to bring the spring when the time has come. Let us toil on then, assured that in due season we shall reap if we faint not, and that God has always a spring after a winter.

VI. The spring has another voice—a voice which sounds away into the far future and foretells 'the time of the restitution of all things.' God, in renewing the face of the earth, seems to give us a visible picture and bright image of that blessed moral renovation which is coming in the fulness of the time.

VII. Another voice—giving announcement of the general resurrection from the dead.

The Apostle says that death and burial of the body is like the sowing of grain—and ah! what a sowing of it there has been in all ages, and how have all the fields of this world where it is sown been watered with mourners' tears! How have men gone forth everywhere, 'weeping, bearing this precious seed'! But the spring-time is coming, the resurrection day. And then the whole earth and the great and wide sea shall give back their buried treasures, and be like a field which the Lord hath blessed.

VIII. Another voice (and this shall be the last) tells us that all our earthly time is the spring season of our existence.

You who are young, 'in the morning sow your seed.' You who are old, 'in the evening withhold not your hand.' You who observe the wind and forget to sow, cease to fret over circumstances, and put more strength to duty. You that sow in tears, sow on, weeping as you go forth, and ye shall reap in joy. It is spring-time with us all; and God, who is renewing the face of the earth, is ready to help us through all the days of our toil, and pledged to reward us with eternal rest.

A. RALEIGH.

The Day which the Lord hath Made.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm cxviii. 24.

I. THE joy of Easter first of all is the joy of a great reaction—a reaction from anxiety and sorrow. So it was at the time of Christ's Resurrection. The Apostles had been crushed by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. They could not have imagined beforehand that one so popular, so powerful, so gifted, so good, would die like a malefactor amid the execrations of the populace, and be buried away out of sight. They had trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel. Their disappointment, their despondency, their anguish were exactly proportioned to their earlier hopes, and, as is always the case in the life of feeling, one deep feeling answered to another. When He was in His grave all seemed over, and when He appeared first to one and then to another on the day of His Resurrection they could not keep their feelings of welcome and delight, traversed though these were by a sense of wondering awe, within anything like bounds. 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

And this joy of the first disciples is repeated every year in the heart of the Christian Church. Those who have felt the sorrow feel also the joy. Those who have entered into Christ's sufferings, and into their own sins as the cause of His sufferings, can rise with glad hearts, I do not say to the heights of apostolic exultation, but certainly to the level of a tranquil delight which offers now to our risen Saviour a sincere greeting on His day of Resurrection. Year by year we Christians accompany our Lord, as it were, over again, to the garden of the agony, to the hall of judgment, to the way of sorrows, to the hill of the crucifixion. Year by year we stand by in spirit while Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus lay Him in His grave; and the tension of sincere feeling, simply added another fact to His life of the same real character. There is a great deal in the history that conveys this sense of reality—not put there for the purpose, but found because it is there. When we read the phrase, 'Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee,' the question rises, Why did Christ make an appointment with His disciples in Galilee? Why did He make that distant place the scene of the main evidence of His Resurrection? Why not here in Jerusalem? Whether they were consciously aimed at or not, certain results were secured that could not have been gained had His appearance been confined to Jerusalem.

I. His Resurrection was thus separated from all those superstitions known as ghosts or apparitions.

Christ rises out of the tomb, discloses Himself to the eyes of loving sympathy, sends a message to His disciples, and goes before them on the long journey to Galilee. It is easy to see how the disciples were thus led to think of the Resurrection, and of other events in Christ's life that were miraculous, as separate from and unlike the superstitions and psychological wonders with which the world was filled. The latter were contrary to nature; they had little to do with morals, and were the offspring of mystery and credulity, and of blind groping after the unknown; they were aside from human life, and out of its true line. But the miraculous element in Christ is in the true line of human life; it is the natural fulfilment of life, and it is also a fulfilment of morals. Hence, a full belief in Christ has always acted against superstition. Superstition has been nearly driven out of the world by the Christian faith, while at the same time it has maintained belief in its own great supernatural facts. The reason it has been able to do this is, that these facts have been kept apart from the superstitions of the world; or, in other words, because a true distinction has been observed.

II. This appointment in Galilee was a testing lesson in faith. We believe on evidence, but in difficult things we want the greatest possible amount of evidence. Faith is awakened in us, but faith needs to be trained and confirmed by some hard act of faith. The disciples heard of the Resurrection, but heard it as an idle tale. Then He appeared to them, and they were affrighted, supposing they had seen a spirit. They behold His hands and feet; they handle Him, and find that He has flesh and bones, and is not a ghostly apparition. But there may yet be room for doubt; it may be an illusion or contagion of credulity that has crept into their wearied and excited minds. And so they are led away from the scene of the event to Galilee, a three days' journey. Thus a twofold end is gained: fresh confirmation, and a stern, testing lesson in faith.

We may be very sure that the disciples, when they beheld their

Lord in the mountain He had appointed, found themselves possessed of an experience that became as solid rock beneath them for all their lives. They worshipped Him with humble and glad adoration, some doubting for the moment in their startled surprise, for in this common world great events require adjustment in our common-thinking minds.

III. We find another explanation of this meeting in Galilee in the fact that Christ saw fit to give them their great commission on the scene of their common labours. For it was in Galilee that they had been called and set to their work. It was in Galilee that the great sermon had been spoken which lay at the bottom of the Gospel; and here His mighty works were chiefly done. His presence in Jerusalem was incidental to His life, and not the main field of it. Nor did Jerusalem so well represent the world that was to be discipled as the northern province. The centre of Pharisaic bigotry and hatred, it might be a starting-point for the Gospel work, but it ill represented the poor and needy world for which the Gospel was primarily intended. If there be a class that is not included in the work of the Gospel, it is the Pharisaic class. The bigot and the hypocrite are seldom converted. The disciples began in Jerusalem, as they were commanded, but only to be scattered like chaff before the wind in regions where there was a better field.

We cannot resist the thought that a mountain was selected by Christ for announcing the great commission, because it aided Him in enforcing it. There was no place so fit for giving His great, final commission. Apart from the world, and yet the world stretched out before them; above the world, and yet upon it; commanding the villages at the foot, and yet stretching their gaze into dim and unmeasured distance; by actual sight beholding men and women in the fields to be discipled, and by imagination beholding all the nations of the earth—thus the disciples stood while He said: 'All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' The place and the scene reinforced the words; the voice of nature was added to the voice of their Master. It imprinted His words upon their imaginations, and they could not but have felt the subtle sympathy and likeness between the lofty and far-reaching scene and the exalted, universal commission they had received. Such thoughts are no mere play of fancy, but are features of Christ's life, to be studied and understood if possible, for so only can we get at the consciousness of Christ before the created works of the Father. The world to Him was not a mere standing-ground for His feet, but was a revelation of God in the order of which He stood, and to the central meaning of which He pierced.

He who went before His disciples into Galilee, goes before us also in all the hard and testing ways of life. We have a Leader who is also a sharer in our life. I do not know of any other way in which to get a comfortable or endurable view of existence. If it is a solitary journey, a dark plunge into the uncertainty of to-morrow; if it is a life unhelped of some other power than our own, there is little to be said for it or done with it. A divine Leader who is also with us, conducting us into His own glory and lifting us into His own peace—this turns life into another thing. It is the crowning feature, as it is well-nigh the whole of the Christian system, that it leads up to an ascension; not resurrection merely, but a rising and a return to God who made us, to the Father from whose creative life we came forth. It is the end that colours and gives character to the whole. From the ascension stream back rays that lighten all the way of life. In such a light its vanity and weariness and pain and uncertainty die out.

T. T. MUNGER.

The Resurrection of the Body.

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. ISAIAH xxvi. 19.

I AM inclined to think that the doctrine of the resurrection—I mean the resurrection of the body, as distinguished from the general idea of a future life—is a truth which we most of us value rather in reference to those we love than in reference to ourselves. I do not know that persons generally are so much attached to their own bodies that it is any particular pleasure to them to feel that they shall have those very bodies again in another state.

Perhaps there may be a fault in this—that we do not appreciate as much as we ought the gift of that particular body which God has assigned to us. But I am much mistaken if to every man the thought of the resurrection of the body of those he has loved is not most comforting. The body is dear. It lives in the deepest places of his heart; and the anticipation of seeing that body again gives a distinctness and a vividness to the meeting in another world which it could not have carried to the mind without it. Even in the intermediate state, we think of the spirits as carrying the impress of the features of the bodies which they had here.

To have loved a face very much—to have associated that face with the deepest passages of life and the sweetest sympathies of years; to have read again and again its lights and its shadows, till the expression of its joy and its sorrow became a part of your very life; to have been so familiar with that form that you could not separate the idea of your existence from its presence; and then to have it taken quite away, and to have stood in the coldness of its absence—that is the hour to know what the resurrection of the body is worth.

For so it is. As life goes on, God's truth becomes more precious to us, and it may be that a last illness will make us all think more of the resurrection of our own body. We can all enter now into the reason why the prophet chose that word, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.'

The passage, however, is very mystical, and it may be a much higher than Isaiah that speaks, for the 'testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' And then these words will contain the deepest evangelical meaning.

Christ, speaking to His Church, says, 'Thy dead men shall live—why? what is the process?—'together with my dead body shall they arise.' Now grasp the great truth which that argument contains.

The natural body of the Lord Jesus Christ rose to-day visibly from the grave. But that visible body was the symbol of another body as real, but invisible. In that invisible body, Christ is the Head and all we the members. All those members, *i.e.* all believers, had died and were crucified with Jesus on the Cross. They went through their punishment then. God saw them there, and at the last day He will treat them as though they had been there; He views them as those who have gone through their sentence and paid their penalty. This is what that means: 'He that is dead is free from sin,' he is free from the debt which his sin incurs, because he has made the compensation for that sin by the death through which he has passed.

In the same way, and in the same degree, all believers were raised in Jesus when Jesus rose. They were in His heart; they would never have risen if they had not been with Him there—they owe resurrection to that union. They could not be in Christ and not rise, therefore the future of their resurrection is to them as certain as any fact in history, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.'

So, of even the resurrection, the dearest part is that we rise with Christ. From the moment that you gave yourself to Christ, or rather from the moment that Christ gave Himself to you, all is with Him, all your joys, all your sorrows, life, death, the grave, the intermediate state, the resurrection morning, heaven, the vast eternity—He has said it of all, 'with Me,' 'with Me.'

That precious deposit which you held, at this moment laid in its quiet resting-place—your own body, when it shall presently be buried, it is enshrined into the body of Jesus, it is knit in that grave with Jesus indissolubly, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.'

Whence? Whither? How? I do not know. But just as Christ's dead body was to the Father, when He was in His grave, so that dead body that I love in that grave is to Christ. And where Christ's dead body is risen, and now is, there shall that body that I love arise and be, and with it, I.

It would be rash to attempt to fathom the abysses of the grave. But I have often led you to think that the intermediate condition, both of the body and of the soul, is characteristically a condition of rest, in distinction from, and preparatory to, that higher position of service to which it leads.

The whole history of a Christian, from his death to the Second Advent, is beautifully written and condensed into a wonderfully small compass in one verse: Isaiah lvii. 2, 'He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.' Here you will observe the entire union of rest and action. No oblivious sleep, no dull unconsciousness, no mere nonentity, and yet no conflict, no labour, but 'they rest in their beds,' *i.e.* the body rests in the ground, gently sleeping till the morning; and the spirit, 'each one walking in his uprightness,' in some happier Eden, walking with the upright One in that uprightness of which the wise man speaks, 'God made men upright,' before we sought out our own many sad inventions. And that is fulfilled, 'They have life more abundantly,' more abundantly in the second Eden than ever they enjoyed in the first Eden.

But to-day our thoughts linger with the body. S. Peter tells us that the restored, like the buried body, owes itself to the same source as that which is the spring, in this world, of the life from the dead of the soul, 'quickened by the Spirit.' Everywhere, from the time that He first 'moved upon the face of the waters,' when the created world went forth, down through baptism, and Pentecost, to the Resurrection—everywhere, the only Creator of life is the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost is made known to us in this verse, under the emblem of dew, 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.'

How the Spirit executes His vivifying work on that which, to human eyes, has absolutely mingled with the common dust about us, must be matter of pure and simple faith. We have, indeed, steps up to it upon the field of nature, but even they—the growing seed, the germinating root, the spreading branch, the transforming chrysalis, the beautifully restored world at this season, and whatever marks the spring-tide of the year, all rather attest the fact than explain the method. We can only follow our illustration. In the hours of the night, when none can watch it, the subtle dew distils and does its silent function, and in the morning each little tendril wakes in its freshness, and the whole earth is instinct with animation, and the glistening herbage leaps to a new existence.

So, for a while, the curtain of darkness spreads itself over the tomb, and behind that veil, how little do we know of the wonderful processes within which that darkness is shrouding: what little, small omnipotent forces are gathering there, what deep mysteries are executing there, what marvels of preparation, ready to burst forth in an instant when the appointed season comes, and when the Easter morning of the Church shall break.

Oh, what a glow of life will overspread our world then, 'Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine own hands.' And this will be the note that the archangel's trumpet rings: 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.'

Only, never again see the dew-drops upon the summer-grass without remembering that there is another dew doing its own bright, proper work in every grave of this churchyard world.

It has been said that the best test of a man's character is how he wakes in the morning. Blessed is the man whose happy conscience wakes him every morning singingly. And what a chorus of sweet melody will be that when every saint that slept awakes to sing. Voices that we heard last so faint and plaintive in their passing hour, how will they carol then!

And what will be the song? Will it be such as suits the ecstasy of parted souls when they meet again, locked in each other's love and rapt in the view of each other's perfect loveliness? Or will it be the echo of the welcome of angels? Or will it be the notes of wonder at the opening glories of the heavenly city—the great white throne, and the armies of angels, and the companies of the saints? Or will it be, higher still, the first chanting of that 'new song which none can learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth'?

Then shall we know what that means, 'the song of Moses and the Lamb.'

Whether it be that our saintly being will then delight to sing of law, even as it sings of salvation,—'the song of Moses and the Lamb.'

Or whether earthly joys and earthly sadnesses will blend to make our music, the triumphant strain of Moses on the shore of the sea where the devoted host lay buried, with the touching hymn, the only one which we read that Jesus ever sang, before He went up to the Mount of Olives,—'the song of Moses and the Lamb.'

Or whether it will be the grander concord of all the victories of all the saints under either Testament,—'the song of Moses and the Lamb.'

Whatever it be—'the song of Moses and the Lamb'—we shall all know it then. Very joyful will it be to 'awake and sing' it, while 'The everlasting doors lift up their heads, and the King of glory,' and His living Church 'come in,' lifting high, as they march, their notes of triumph.

But are there no foretastes? are there no resurrections? are there no preludes to the songs of the blessed now?

Since last this highest festival of our church came round, the changes and the sorrows and the sins of this world have made many of our hearts to bow like a bulrush, and stooped us to the ground. And I see many of you this day—you are living in the vain memories of an irrevocable past, you are sitting in the heaviness of your oppressed spirits, you are imprisoned in your own condemning thoughts, your souls are burdened and you cannot lift up yourselves.

But know ye not this day that the 'Sun of Righteousness is risen, with healing in His wings'? 'Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust!' Is it for you—for you whose loved ones are in heaven, is it for you whose own mansion is preparing there, is it for you whose sins are all pardoned and whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, is it for you who are so soon to follow those blessed ones and be with them for ever and ever—is it for you to lay low when all earth and heaven is up and busy with life and love and service? High time is it now to shake off the coil and go forth to your high privileges of sacred duty: 'for, lo, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone,' and in all nature and grace, in earth and heaven, the voice of your risen Lord is speaking now, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Seven Easter Promises of Jesus Christ.

Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me. S. MATTHEW xxviii. 10.

I WOULD bring before you the seven promises of the Resurrection. The first two are in S. Matthew, and are contingent upon obedience; the next four are in S. Mark, and are contingent upon faith; the seventh is found in the Acts, and is the crowning blessing of them all.

I. The first is in S. Matthew xxviii. 10: 'Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.' It is the first promise of the risen Lord. He knew the first desire of their hearts when they heard He was risen from the dead would be, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.'

This promise is contingent upon obedience. See verse 10: 'Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.' No doubt there was a reason for the command. It was in Galilee that the majority of His followers were to be found; it was there, therefore, He would make His great appearance to His Church—that appearance mentioned by S. Paul in 1 Corinthians xv., when He appeared to about five hundred brethren at once, when He gave them their marching orders to go and make disciples of all nations. But is this promise, 'There shall they see Me,' only for those first disciples? Is it not also for me? Do I not want to see Him? Yes, even for me, upon this bright Easter morning, the promise rings out sweet and clear, 'Ye shall see Me.' Only go back to your daily life, your Galilee, in faith, and ye shall see Me—see Me as the risen One, see Me as the conquering One, see Me as the everlasting One.

II. The second promise is in S. Matthew xxviii. 20: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' The presence which Christ here promises is a spiritual presence, which can only be discerned through the Holy Ghost, but which Christ promises, as in this passage, to His whole Church—that body mystical, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; that Holy Catholic Church against which the gates of hell shall never be able to prevail. And it is on account of this Presence that this Church lives and grows and flourishes; though crushed here, it springs up there. It is the bush which, though burning, is not consumed, because God is there.

III. The third Easter promise you will find in S. Mark xvi. 16: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' And surely He has this glorious Easter promise for us upon this His Resurrection Day. You must believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; that He is risen again for our justification; and that He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to pour out upon us His Holy Spirit. And then you must confess this in God's own appointed way—by baptism, typifying our complete separation from the old past life and our perfect dependence upon the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit; and so further runs the promise of the risen Jesus, 'Ye shall be saved.'

IV. The fourth promise is in S. Mark xvi. 17—the promise of power. 'And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.' The promise, you will perceive again, is contingent upon faith, and it is a promise of power over spiritual foes and over natural disqualifications. The timid, shrinking Peter shall speak with boldness before three thousand men; and John, the hasty Boanerges, shall become the Apostle of gentleness and of love.

V. The fifth promise, in the following verse, is a promise of safety and immunity from harm: 'They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.' I have no doubt that the literal fulfilment of these promises might be exemplified from the lives of the immediate Apostles of our Lord. But we have less interest in the legends, true or false, which tradition has preserved, than in the practical applicability of these promises to ourselves to-day. The Master promises to His disciples, on the condition of their faith in Him, perfect safety amidst the dangers of the work, so that what is harmful to others shall not hurt them.

VI. The sixth promise of usefulness is to be found in the close of the selfsame verse: 'They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' Yes, the blessing shall not end with yourself; others shall live by your life. You will only be helpful when you yourself are safe, and you will only be safe when you are helpful. The risen Jesus has left you in this world as His representative, to heal the sorrows of the world, and works through you in conferring blessings upon the outcast and the sad.

VII. The last promise is to be found in Acts i. 5—the promise of the Holy Ghost: 'Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' This is the crowning blessing of the risen Christ. Without this all would be of no avail. If the Master is going, we must have the other Comforter, who will abide with us for ever. Wait, then, with prayer and patience for the fulfilment of this promise; for He will come, He will not tarry.

E. A. STUART.

The Christian Doubter.

And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.
S. MATT. xxviii. 17.

THAT book which writes on its pages, 'But some doubted,' is a truthful book. It is not patching up, or propping up, some cunningly devised fable; if it were, it would say that so overwhelming was the proof that not one person to whom it was presented could for an instant doubt it. That book itself seems to feel for us. It is as though it would say this to us: A great demand is here made upon your faith. The matter presented to you is above nature; flesh and blood cannot receive it. Be not surprised if you stagger at its strangeness; so did some of those to whom it first came, some of those to whose senses the proof appealed, some of those who became afterwards its messengers and its witnesses. Be not ashamed, be not terrified, if at first you receive the record with hesitation or amidst misgivings; of those to whom it first came, some doubted.

I. These persons were not doubters from any disposition to cavil. They did not think it an ingenious thing to find out difficulties in believing. Their minds were open to conviction should sufficient evidence be vouchsafed to them. There was a difficulty in accepting the truth, and God had not yet given them all the proof which He designed for them. The evidences of Christ's Resurrection were not yet complete. He who does nothing in vain designed for them some further light; and, till that light was given, it can scarcely be said with perfect reverence that doubt was excluded.

II. These persons were not doubters from its being their interest to disbelieve. They were not persons who had dark places in heart or in life which they wished to keep dark. They were not cherishing bosom sins, and they were not treading underfoot known duties. If they had been in this condition, of course a holy Saviour could not have been welcome to them. Well might they have hoped that the Master and the Judge of man, once laid in His grave, might stay there and see corruption. Are we quite sure, that in our doubts there is no lingering motive of this nature? At least I am persuaded that no source of doubt is so fruitful as a careless, inconsistent, godless, sinful life; that no man is so likely to be beset with misgivings about the truth of Christ's Resurrection or the authority of God's Word, as he who has kept himself through early years out of the reach of Christ's inward voice; and that no retribution is more certain in its coming, or more just in its infliction, than that which visits a long neglect of duty with a judicial incapacity for believing.

III. These persons did not make doubt a reason for not obeying or for not worshipping. They came at Christ's call into Galilee to meet Him; and when they saw Him there, they worshipped. There are degrees in doubt as there are degrees in faith. Every doubt is not an adverse judgment. A man may obey though he doubts, and a man may worship though he doubts.

IV. A last word remains. These persons, as they did not allow doubt to drive them from Christ's service or from Christ's worship, so were turned from doubters into resolute believers by a nearer access to Christ, and by the revelation of His risen power. While they stood afar off, while they paid Him only the distant homage of a doubting reverence, so long the very sight of Him was not conclusive: they must have seen that it was He Himself, long their Companion, their Friend, their Guide, their Master, but they allowed the thought of the difficulty, the thought of the Cross, and the thought of the death, and the thought of the grave to overbear that conviction of the senses; they fancied it almost less improbable that some one else should wear that loved form and personate that gracious Master, than that a victory so marvellous, so beyond former experience, should have been won over that last enemy before whom rank and wealth, before whom strength and sovereignty alike bow down to rise up no more. But now when He drew nigh and spake to them; when they heard once again the gracious words that proceeded out of His lips; when they heard Him tell of the mystery of His kingdom, and bestow upon them with the living voice the commission of His representatives below; when He gave them a certain form of initiation into the membership of His Church, and promised His own Divine Presence to be with them till time should be no more, then at last they felt that to doubt on would be less a sin than a madness: He who thus spake could be none other than the Son of God Most High. Before proof it was right to doubt, but after proof it would be impiety and blasphemy: and thus the understanding which had been in suspense was decided and satisfied, and the homage of a longing heart was fulfilled in the devotion of a life and of a death.

The Christian doubter will derive guidance as well as hope from the example now before us. And that in three points.

1. He will seek nearer access to Christ.

2. He will especially hail any sign of Christ's willingness to employ him.

3. But last, and above all, the Christian doubter must seek the illumination of the Holy Ghost.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

God's Acre.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. S. MARK xvi. 5.

I. IN Hindoo mythology there is one power—the eternal foe of the whole human race—relentless, terrible, at whose name men fear and quake, and whose unceasing wrath they strive hopelessly to appease—Shiva, the Destroyer. And are not we accustomed to look upon death very much as a Shiva—a power apart from God and independent of God? Death, which indeed formed no part of the Almighty's original design for man, death, which is terrible enough to humanity, of course—but death which is nevertheless one of God's own angels, executing the decrees of the Almighty, working out His Will. And more than this, death which is robbed of its very sting because of the glad Easter tidings which announce that 'Christ the Royal Master' has overcome death and conquered hell.

But then, the Easter tidings (although the evidence that supports these tidings is overwhelming—so clear, that one infidel, Gilbert West, attacking Christianity on this point, becomes convinced as proof accumulates, and renounces unbelief)—these tidings, I say, if they are to mean anything to us, presuppose faith on our part. And we love to walk by sight—we regard things, and are affected by them, as they appear to us; and so we go on, looking upon death as our terrible enemy—an implacable unconquered foe, and one that can take from us, at any moment, all that makes life glad. To us the grave is but a charnel-house; connected in our minds only with the shroud and the worm and the silence and helplessness of those whom death has claimed. And thus, if asked to point out the saddest, gloomiest, and most sombre place in the parish, I suppose we should point to the churchyard.

II. And yet we love to call it by the beautiful name, God's Acre! And when we sadly bear our loved ones thither, to leave them sleeping 'till there breaks the last, the brightest Easter morn,' the words which greet us on its very threshold are words that speak of life, and not of death: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord!'

Up to this hour death had been a strange, sad mystery to the angels of God. But now all is changed. Man's redemption is accomplished. The Son of God, who humbled Himself and yielded Himself to death now comes forth from the grave, Victor over death. And so, even as the representatives of an earthly Sovereign plant their national standard, and take possession in the monarch's name, of some piece of territory where despotism and horrible cruelties have been the rule, and then peace and safety enter in and dwell there; so the Angel of the Resurrection, as the representative of the King of kings, claims as subject to his Master the very stronghold of death, and declares its character henceforth altered: 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.'

'In ancient mythology we read of Medea, the enchantress, casting the limbs of old men into her caldron that they might come forth young again.

'And sleep, in its own way, does all this. We are old enough in weariness often after hours of thought and labour, but we sleep, and wake refreshed as though beginning a new life. . .

'Such, too, is the effect of the body's visit to its grave. Put away all weary and worn, such they will not rise: they go there with furrowed brow, hollow cheek, wrinkled skin, they shall wake up in beauty and glory.

'So He giveth His beloved sleep.'

The thought of the angel in the sepulchre should be to us the pledge of our own resurrection and final bliss. 'Why not the bodies in the grave to be in heaven one day, as well as the angels of heaven to be in the grave this day?' J. B. C. MURPHY.

Our Risen Lord's Love for Penitents.

Now, when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. S. MARK xvi. 9.

AT the Cross, the outcast and penitent was equalled to the holy and the pure; at the Resurrection, even preferred. Holy Scripture tells us not how or when the Redeemer healed her sorrows, 'whose very soul the sword had pierced' at His crucifixion; it does say of the penitent, to her Jesus appeared first. He who had passed by all the angel-hosts, and 'took not their nature' but ours, the last of His fallen creatures, passed by her (so the Scripture says) through whom He took that nature, to comfort her who had most degraded it. 'He appeared first unto Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.' 'He was seen of Cephas, then of all the Apostles'; seen first of all the Apostles by him who, having denied Him, had 'wept bitterly.' Yet even before him who was first in confession of faith in Him, and now grieving over his fall; before John who loved Him and whom above all He loved; before Andrew, who brought his brother to Him; or Nathanael, to whom He of whom it is said, 'neither was guile found in His mouth,' bare witness that he was conformed unto Himself, 'In him is no guile'; or Thomas, who said, 'Let us also go with Him that we may die with Him'; or Philip, to whom He revealed, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'; or James, the chosen witness of His miracles, of the glories of His transfiguration and His agony—before all the eleven who had 'been with Him in His temptations,' and who were to sit on His throne of glory—He showeth Himself to a penitent. Not zeal, nor hearts of fire, nor a guileless spirit, nor burning faith, nor devotion unto death, nor love which lay on His bosom, nor on whose bosom He who 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power' had vouchsafed in infancy to be borne—not apostolic love, or a mother's tears, win from Him His first look, but the tears of a penitent. His mother doubtless He comforted by His Spirit; the penitent He comforts by His very presence and His words.

EASTER DAY

I. The mercy of the Resurrection is even fuller than the mercy at the Cross, which it completed. The mercy at the Cross was acceptance; the mercy at the Resurrection was not acceptance only, but enlarged grace, heavenly visitations, to be known by name to Jesus, called as His own, spoken to in the heart, to have one God with the Man Christ Jesus, one Father with the Co-Eternal Son. Great indeed and blessed are the words, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

At the Cross, Jesus promised that the penitent should be with Him; in the Resurrection Himself cometh, victorious over hell and death and Satan—His body spiritual, glorious, incapable of suffering (an earnest of the gifts He will bestow on these poor bodies), to be with the penitent.

II. The visits of Jesus after the Resurrection are tokens of the ways in which He visiteth souls now. He came as a Spirit. Closed doors were no hindrance to His spiritual body. His disciples said, 'It is a spirit.' Not only a spirit, our blessed Lord taught them, 'for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' His sacred humanity and its life-giving scars remain; yet He cometh and goeth as a spirit. Where during these mysterious forty days He was, we know not; He ate, in proof that He still retained our human nature in His divine, but He needed it not; He was present, not in weakness any longer, but in power, girt around with 'all power in heaven and in earth'; none could know Him save those to whom He revealed Himself; His works kindled the heart; His wonted tones, by which He called His own, disclosed him: He made Himself known by sacraments to the two at Emmaus; by His voice, 'Mary!' to the Magdalene; by His wounded hands and side to the Apostles; and again, by His wonted deeds of power to the seven at the sea of Tiberias. And so He would teach us how He would visit His own unto the end; gathered together in His name, showing love, as we think, to a stranger and in Him receiving Christ, in the lawful works of our calling, and in the penitent seeking for Him.

Thou needest not then sit down in weariness and hopelessness, whatever of earlier years thou hast lost, whatever grace thou hast forfeited, though thou hast been in a far country, far away in affections from Him who loved thee, and wasting on His creatures, nay, sacrificing on idol altars with strange fire, the gifts which God gave thee, that thou mightest be precious in His own sight. He who called Magdalene, in her calleth thee. He who, by His sweetness in her soul, drew her to cast away all this world's deadly sweetness, will speak to thine, if thou wilt hearken. Wert thou bound and a slave to all the deadly sins, thy state were not more hopeless than hers seemed, when seven devils held her bound and indwelt her. He who, as at this time, appeared to her, as she might bear to gaze upon Him, will appear unto thee. Be thy soul to thee as an empty tomb, where Christ's lifeless body once was buried by thy sins, and now is not; be it that thou see nothing but darkness, feel nothing but the chillness and damp of the tomb, catch no ray of light, look again and again, and discover no trace of Him; yea, worse still, though thou see there 'the linen clothes,' the tokens that He once was there, and now is gone from thee, and now all religion seems to thee but a lifeless form, a mere outside with no inward substance, 'the napkin about His head,' but in thee 'the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head,' though thou call and none seemeth to answer, thou ask where they have laid Him, that thou mayest again seek Him and do Him what honour thou mayest, and none telleth thee, despair not. Only seek on, and thou shalt find. Mourn His absence, desire His presence. The very desire is His presence. Thou couldest not desire Him, but for His presence in thy soul; thou couldest not mourn His absence, unless He taught thee to mourn, that thou mightest be hereafter comforted. He will appear unto thee by some comfort in prayer; some joy in a deed of self-denial to chasten thyself, or for His poor; some secret stillness of the soul, or ray of light, though but for an instant; or by some thrill of joy on one steadfast purpose, henceforth to have no other object but 'to win Christ,' to love all thou lovest in Him and for Him, to know nothing 'save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'

H. B. PUSEY.

I will Arise.

I will arise. S. LUKE xv. 18.

THERE are two ways in which every believer stands in relation to the great facts of our Saviour's history. In a deep, mystical sense, we were in those facts; we did them as members of His body; we were born in His birth; we grew in His growth; we conquered with His conquests; we died in His death; we were buried in His burial; we ascended in His Ascension; we reign in His reigning. This is the hidden life of the Christian, wrapped up in the life of his Lord.

But, besides this, all the events of our Lord's life are emblems; there is an allegory in them all. We have now a birth, a progress, a ministry, a warfare, a passion, a death, a grave, a resurrection, and ascension, and in every one the corresponding event in His history is the pattern of it.

It is thus that I take the Resurrection. If we are His, not only have we risen in Him, but we must rise like Him. As S. Paul says, 'If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.'

Now, if I had to select a great practical thought for this season, it would be this: 'I must rise; I will get up; I have to come out of some things which have been like a grave to me, and I will go on to some things which will be to me a new, a higher life.' But how? What have I to search after? In what can I start anew? And by what means can I effect it? What is the secret of a risen life? How can I make this Easter an Easter to my soul?

And you will observe that this was the first thought, the first working of the Holy Spirit in the mind of a man who was determined to do right: 'I will arise.' The word is exactly the same in the original as we translate resurrection. It is, 'I will stand up; I will get out of sloth and self and sin and fear and hesitation and doubt, and all such habits. "I will arise."'

And it is exactly the resolve we all ought to make this day, 'I will arise.' Whatever your standing-point at this moment may be—whether you are wicked or worldly, or just converted, or a little way on, or far advanced, or ever so holy—it does not matter, it is what we all want, 'I will arise.'

I. I wish you to think how we may try to copy Christ in His rising. It is quite certain that all the other Persons of the Holy Trinity united to make the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. You might extend the thought. In every fact of our religion you will find the concurrence of the Trinity. Christ Himself said, 'I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.' The Holy Ghost raised Him; 'He was quickened by the Spirit.' It was the act of the Trinity.

Now, here I lay my base. Like the Resurrection of Jesus, the rising and elevation of the soul is so great, and mighty, and miraculous an act, that it needs the whole majesty and being of God—it demands the Trinity. It is like what you have often tried before this—to put new life into your soul and to raise it, and you have failed. Did you recognise, did you engage the whole Trinity for that work? Did you think of it, and feel and pray that the Father must be in it, the Son must be in it, the Holy Ghost must be in it? There must be love and sufficiency, blood and mediatorship, and inworking of the Holy Spirit. If you did not, that was the cause of your failure. It was not laid in the Trinity. Try on the principle of the Resurrection of Christ. Begin by committing it to the entire Trinity, and realise the office of each in the work. So, and so only, you will introduce an agency which is adequate to the process. You will find that the secret of success is to put God in His proper place. To quicken the dead soul, or elevate the living one, requires God; and God is Trinity. You must remember, and act upon it—God is Trinity.

II. As far as we can conceive, the method of the Resurrection of Christ was this: His Spirit, which had walked in Paradise, returns to the sepulchre and enters into the body, and thereby put life into it and raised it. Just as we believe it will be with us in our resurrection. . . . As soon as that Spirit of Christ was in the body, from that moment its rising was certain. Death had lost its force and could not detain Him. There was a law in His being which was a necessity to resurrection.

It is so with you now. There is a law in your being by which everything within you gravitates to the earth. You go down, you sink, and bury yourself. You are 'of the earth, earthy.' But when Christ is joined to you, exactly the reverse takes place—you are under a necessity to go up. It is as much a necessity for you to rise as it was before for you to fall. It is 'Christ in you' that compels the resurrection. It is not your wishing it, or setting about it ever so earnestly. No one ever became religious by that. It must be 'Christ in you.' An indwelling Christ commands and secures a resurrection. Take care that you go to work the right way—union with Jesus, union with Jesus.

A stone, a seal, and guards shut Jesus into the tomb. But you remember how stone and seal and guards all became as if they were not when once God in Trinity began to work, and the inward power asserted itself. And there is some great stone or seal or guard which is made so very fast over you. There is something or other in the world which is really holding you down and shutting you in that you cannot get out. I don't know what the stone is, or who the people are that are exercising this influence on you. Perhaps it is the power of some sin; perhaps the world; or your love of money; perhaps it is the stone of your own rocky heart. You know best who it is, or what it is. But it is too big a stone for your hand to roll away. As soon as the resurrection power is at work, when 'Christ in you' begins to move, it will be all as nothing—the seal and stone and guards—you scarcely know how: it was as heavy as a mountain, but is now as light as a feather. Don't begin by trying to move away the stone, begin from within. When your soul really begins to rise, the stone, the seal, and the guards as strangely lose their power, and cease to be.

How far there are the ministrations of angels in the spiritual rising of the soul, I cannot affirm. We should be careful never to assign to angels the office of the Holy Spirit, but we cannot doubt that, in some degree, they take their part, as they do in heaven. Certainly, they will take their part in the resurrection; and, if so, they must have joy in every upward movement. Whatever it is needful for them to do for us, they will do; and if they do nothing, it is because God does everything.

But watch if, in any measure that may be granted to us, that which was such a beautiful accompaniment of our Lord's Resurrection—that others should come out of their graves, suppose that your rising should raise them? Is not it a thing to be hoped for? May we not pray for it: 'Lord, should I rise, don't let me rise alone. Let me help another. May the Christ in me repeat itself in the resurrection of another soul.'

The marvel of the risen Christ was, that He was so exactly the same, and yet so different! I suppose it will be so with us all. We shall be so changed, and yet so identical with ourselves. And as it was with Christ after His Resurrection, when He was not subject to the same laws as before, but His presence needed some recognition, and yet His mind and body were unchanged, even to the mode of speech, and the print of the nails—so it will be with the resurrection of most on this earth. Whatever characteristics a man has here will characterise him there. But a new motive and new affections render all things new, the man is there; but the whole man is in Christ.

There is no feeling of the heart like the feeling of rising—the air is so light, the man is so disencumbered, the pure heavens so above him! It is like one continued early morning. It is the soul's sweet spring-time.

Only resolve heartily, 'I will arise, and I will arise like Christ. Too long I have been contented with my degradation; too long have I consented to live so short of what I was meant to live for.' Break one fetter—the fetter of an idle habit, the fetter of a sin. Break one fetter, and the loosening of one will loosen another, and another, and another, till you stand out unbound, in your true and proper element—a man of soul and thought, a man of lofty ideas and eternal hope. Then men will look for you where you once were, and they will say, 'He is not here,' and the answer will be, 'No, he is not here—he has risen!'

Only go and do something which tells of rising—some new work, some old duty with more of Jesus in it, some act of self-sacrifice, some step heavenward, some feature of Jesus recall, and let God be witness of the result—'I will arise!'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Living sought among the Dead.

Why seek ye the living among the dead? S. Luke xxiv. 5.

WHY seek ye the living among the dead? Who, you will ask, does this now?

I. It is done, in the worst sense, by those whom Scripture calls the children of this world. If we look for our happiness below—whether in riches, honours, or pleasures, whether in ambition, self-indulgence, or love—we are, in the worst sense, seeking the living among the dead. This world is one great sepulchre, and the men that live for it are so many soulless bodies. This life, let it run its course for a few years, has been to each of us, or will be, the grave of many hopes, many beliefs, and many affections. How difficult is it, looking back even from middle life, much more from old age, even to imagine to ourselves enjoyments which in some earlier stage of being were our all in all! Pursuits which we once lived for seem to us now mere insipidity and emptiness. Joys for which we would have sold a birthright are seen now as the mere mess of pottage. Friends, alas! whom we once idolised have forgotten us or have been forgotten. The mere lapse of time, the mere change of circumstances—still within the limits of this life—makes everything that is behind seem insignificant, seem delusive: shall it not be thus when we advance one step further, and look back upon the world that is from the world that shall be? Let us listen betimes to the warning voice which says to us, Why seek ye the permanent in the transitory? 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'

II. The same question has its application to formalism in religion. And what do we mean by formalism? We mean that habit of resting in the means of grace as if they were ends, of regarding the ordinances of religion as if they were securities for acceptance, which is at once the oldest and the most obstinate of all human tendencies in the things of God. There may not have been in the man one spark of real sorrow for sin, of real anxiety for salvation, of real wrestling in prayer, of real, honest, heart-deep gratitude to the Saviour who shed for him His most precious blood. And if it be so, if it be indeed so, then to him belongs, not in an encouraging but in a fatally condemning application, the grave question of the text, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'

III. We approach more nearly to its first meaning when we speak of its bearing upon the case of doubters. These flit around the grave, they feel it as holy ground, they bring their offerings of praise and of reverence to Him whom they have left lying therein. But they stop short of a hearty and a lively faith in Christ risen. They hope it may be so; they do not deny it; but it forms no part of their daily trust or of their daily motive. And thus they lose, and must lose, that which is distinctive and characteristic in Christianity. They cannot hold the Atonement, and they cannot hold the Divinity, of their Saviour. They cannot build upon Him, and they cannot live by Him. Oh, for a voice, not of severity but of attraction, to ring in their ears the angelic remonstrance, 'Why seek ye the living One among the dead?'

IV. There is a different case, though in one point resembling this, to which I would make a last application of the words of the text. It is that of Christian people, true believers, firm holders of the Propitiation and the Mediation of Jesus Christ, but who yet never advance practically beyond the death, beyond the Cross and the grave, into the clear light and full glory of a risen Saviour. They bring their sins for forgiveness, night by night, to the foot of the Cross; they place no slight and no presumptuous trust in that blood of sprinkling which speaks peace to the conscience; and they pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to keep them from treating as an unholy or a common thing that blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified. What lack they yet? Onwards not backwards, upwards not downwards, be the eye of their souls ever directed, if they would know the inheritance, the present inheritance, of the saints in light, or know the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of His calling, who says, 'I am the Resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. He is not here: He is risen.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

On the Resurrection Life of the Christian.

The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. HEBREWS xiii. 20, 21.

Now, upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. S. LUKE xxiv. 1.

I. WITHOUT the right aim of life, there is no spirit of life. But this must not be established alone, but only in union with a corresponding power of life. Should we courageously and joyfully behold the real human purpose of life, then we may have the certainty that it is attainable. Otherwise we should look upon it with hesitation and doubt. We must be animated with the joyful hope that we shall succeed in its accomplishment; for without hope there is no joyousness and no courage. And what does all this depend on? Two things. We must, on the one side, find in ourselves the requisite ability for the attainment of that aim, and so have true respect for ourselves individually, as well as for mankind in general. And, on the other hand, we must have the certainty that, if we honestly do our duty, the external conditions of success, which are independent of us, will not be wanting to us. In this respect, the chief thing is, as you are aware, that we know ourselves to be in harmony, in our work for carrying out the purpose of our life, with the holy guidance of divine Providence, so that all things work together for good (Rom. viii. 28), that we know ourselves at one with God's holy purpose, and feel ourselves sustained, supported, and led by Him. And only in so far as we know ourselves in such a relation to our God, can we consider ourselves capable of the realisation of the aim of our life. Yes, he who, with all his will and deeds, with all his effort and endeavour, keeps throughout his whole existence thus near to his God, and can lay himself with such childlike confidence in his Father's arm,—his heart beats high with joyful resurrection life; but his only can do this.

II. Only look how Christ grasped the aim of His life. I mean, with what decision, with what perfect distinctness. For here we see a life of such consistency as has never again happened in our experience,—a human life, in which there were no vacillations, but only the steady, constant progress pursued with unhesitating inward steadfastness, straight forward to a fixed and immovable aim, which was not left out of sight for one moment, among the changeful external conditions of the world. And therefore it was also a human life of no less unexampled unity and entireness. And did not the aim, which so completely governed this human life, embrace time and eternity; did it not unite earth and heaven into a peaceful union, while it grasped this poor existence in the world of sin as the material from which an eternal and heavenly existence was to be fashioned? And did He not have regard to God's aim? Did He, who lived this life, wish for anything else than the will of His heavenly Father, who showed the Son all that He did, that He also might do likewise? Did He know any other meat than this, to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work? Since the risen Christ is in the world, sin can no longer frustrate our true life, unless we wish to remain the servants of vanity. Sin is now conquered, it can now tie down no one, against his will, to the dust and the mire.

What else was the work of His life, then, than the awakening of pure goodness in the world, than the conquering of sin? In the first place, His Resurrection from the dead was the testimony of God Himself, that He had succeeded in it. But He has conquered sin for us. Our redemption from sin was the work of His life, the atonement for the sins of the world, making the forgiveness of sins and the adoption of God possible for us, as well as the acquisition of the Holy Ghost, in whose power we are also able to conquer sin, in ourselves and in the world.

Faith only draws out of this fountain in proportion as we surrender ourselves with absolute obedience to the risen Christ. For only by this can we recognise Him in ourselves as the risen Saviour. Only the pure heart knows the courageous spirit of life which comes from the Resurrection. Therefore we always go through Holy Week to arrive at the Feast of the Resurrection. For purity is not won without the school of sufferings, and these have a tendency to depress the spirit of our life. It is certainly not an easy thing to find the resurrection spirit of life; but it is a precious thing, and let that be enough for us. R. ROTHE.

How to Detain Jesus in the Soul.

And He made as though He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. S. Luke xxiv. 28, 29.

I. DOUBTS as to the use of holy things we do, or of God's gifts to us, or even of the faith, and of the reality of everything unseen, are parts of Satan's assults against us. He does not assail all so, but those whom he thinks he can hurt or torment in this way, and whom God permits so to be tried; as our blessed Lord said to S. Peter, 'Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, to sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' Thus, because of two children, one baptized and the other unbaptized, we may see in the one, little or no fruits of grace; and the natural temper of the unbaptized seems sweeter than that of the baptized, people are tempted to deny the grace of baptism altogether. And so, also, as to the other sacrament, the poor are not uncommonly tempted to think that God has no grace for them in it, because they see that others, careless persons, gain none. Others have been tempted to look on all faith as a dream, or deny what God has said to be true. In such cases, people, because they do not see the promises of God fulfilled, doubt whether they can or will be fulfilled to them. They cannot but see that God does promise, in His Word, that He will hear prayer, bless fasting, enrich those who give alms; that by baptism we are clothed with Christ; in the Holy Eucharist are made one with Him, that the Church is the appointed channel of His gifts and of salvation. But men come short of God's gracious will for them; and so they are tempted to doubt of His promises altogether. Just so the disciples of Emmaus. They had believed that Jesus was 'He who would redeem Israel.' But He redeemed it not in the way they looked for. He had foretold that He should arise from the dead on the third day; 'to-day,' they say, 'is the third day since these things were done'; and He had not appeared. Had they, upon this, gone away, He never would have appeared unto them. They were saddened, perplexed, yet still they mused on Jesus and His promises. And so, as and when they looked not, relief came. 'Jesus drew near and went with them,' while they knew not, hoped not, that it was He. And so in the like cases now, doubts will have no real hold upon us while we hold fast to Jesus.

II. Then, while thus communing with Jesus, take we heed that we act as He teacheth. Our deeds are the fruits of our faith, but they fix it and secure it in our souls. Without deeds love grows chilled, and, with it, faith. We have no direct power over our faith. It is the gift of God. We cannot make ourselves believe, or make our belief more lively than it is. If we endeavour to work upon it, we mostly impair it, or substitute some counterfeit for it. If we will do God's will, He will uphold, strengthen, guard, revive it. Good deeds are the life of faith; for they retain in the soul the presence of Christ, who is the soul's life. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' Nothing shall hurt thy faith, while thy heart is whole with God; nothing shall warp thy heart, while, for love of Christ, thou dost deeds of love. When the disciples listened to Jesus, their hearts burned within them: when, although unknown, they showed love to Him, and 'constrained Him to tarry with them,' He made Himself known unto them. Christ is with us now, everywhere, in His poor, sick, naked, hungry, thirsty. Have mercy on them, as thou canst, wherein they need, and He who alone giveth thee what He withholds from them, that thou, for His sake, mayest supply them, will have mercy on thee.

III. There is yet another and larger teaching of this history, which extends over the whole of life, relates to every communion; to every fervent prayer which any, by God's grace, prays; every melting of the hard heart, every drawing of the soul to serve God better. It belongs to every outpouring of His grace, and is of especial moment in holy seasons such as this. It is, the great need of active diligence, not to part with Jesus, when He has once been near us, and visited our souls. On this depend growth in grace, the good pleasure of God, the love of Christ, holiness, everlasting bliss, salvation. 'Jesus made as though He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening.' So it is with the soul. Jesus visits it many ways. Everyvisitation of God, in awe and mercy, is a visit of Jesus to the soul. Everything which deadens the soul to the world, or quickens it to heavenly things, is a visit of Jesus. Fast or feast; Lent or Easter; inward joy or outward sorrow; the hunger of the soul, or His satisfying it; the restlessness of the soul until it has found God; or the deep, tranquil calm, when His light dawns on the soul, and it sees and feels that it was made for One alone, that One alone can fill it, One love displaces all besides, One object of its faith, hope, joy, praise, its labour or its rest, its speech or its silence, stands revealed before it; the unformed yearning of the young soul to be wholly God's; or the aching of the heart of elders, that it has ever loved things out of Him; the bright glow of childhood which says with young Samuel, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;' or penitence stricken with Saul to the earth, and crying from the dust, 'Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?'—every thought of God, every desire to love Him; every hope, fear, misgiving, imagining; every crushing of the heart's bright earthly joys; every gleam of that Unsetting Sun which shineth on it from heaven; the hiding of His face, or the sunshine of His presence; all are, in different forms, visits of Jesus. Yet in all, we have need to say, 'Abide with us, Lord!' E. B. PUSEY.

The Risen Body of Christ.

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. S. LUKE xxiv. 39.

I. NOTE first of all the nature of our Lord's risen Body. It was the Body which had been born of the Virgin Mary and had been nailed to the Cross, and out of which life had been expelled by the painful death of crucifixion, and which had been buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. This identity is insisted on by our Lord. He pointed to the very wounds that had been made on the preceding Friday: 'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.' And then, to meet the suspicion that a spiritual being of some kind was personating bodily form, He adds, 'Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' Mark that 'flesh and bones.' It sets aside the notion that the Body of the risen Saviour was somehow a body, and yet not real flesh; bodily form without nerves, and veins, and bodily substance; an etherealised likeness of the body which had been crucified, but not the body itself. 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' And this literal identity of the risen with the crucified Body of Christ was to be made good by another test. When our Lord had shown to His disciples His hands and feet, and they believed not for joy and wondered, He said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?' He would show that the digestive and nutritive functions of His risen Body were still intact. At the great festivals, fish was brought to Jerusalem in quantities from the Mediterranean coast, and if it was to be had anywhere, it would certainly be forthcoming in the house of Zebedee. So 'they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb, and He took it and did eat before them.' Our Lord's risen body was literally the same body which had been crucified, and yet it had properties attaching to it which distinguished it. We cannot, indeed, say of His Body, as of our own, that it was 'sown in corruption,' since corruption is the brand and note of sin, and God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. But it was 'sown in dishonour and raised in glory'; it was 'sown in weakness and raised in power'; and, especially, it was 'sown a natural body'—that is, a body governed by the ordinary laws of nature—and 'raised a spiritual body,' that is, a body which, while retaining physical substance and unimpaired identity, was yet endowed and interpenetrated with some of the properties of spirit. Our Lord's risen Body had, undoubtedly, properties which belong to spirit, but they did not suspend or impair its strict reality as a body, as the Body which was born of Mary—the Body which had been nailed upon the cross of shame.

II. Our Lord's precept, 'Handle Me, and see,' is addressed to two different classes of men. It is an encouragement for the timid. The Apostles were thoroughly frightened at the appearance of the risen Jesus. They were bidden to draw near and handle Him, and see if there was aught to terrify them. He did not always speak thus. When, in the early morning of that very day, the impulsive Magdalene, in her passionate and eager love, would have laid hold on Him, He checked her: 'Touch Me not; I am not yet ascended unto My Father.' This intimate contact is a privilege for the hesitating and the timid. There are in every generation some men who are afraid to come near enough to religion to do it justice. It inspires them with a certain curiosity, but with less of curiosity than of apprehension. There is something mysterious about its language, its services, its ministers, which attracts and yet repels them—repels them sufficiently to prevent them investigating its claims. We all of us must have met in life men who look into the Bible now and then, enter a church now and then, engage in religious conversation now and then, but, on the whole, are suspicious, distant, unwilling, as they say, to commit themselves. They listen to a sermon, and its phraseology, necessarily differing as it does from that in which we conduct the affairs of common life, seems to them weird and strange. They are present in a church while the Holy Sacrament is being celebrated, and the successive stages of the service, and the posture of the worshippers, and the mysterious acts of consecration and communion, seem to belong to an order of ideas which inspires apprehension, or at least awe, rather than love and confidence. And to such our Lord says, 'Handle Me, and see'—the sacrament of My death, the words of My Gospel, can only thus alarm you while you keep at a distance from them; to come close is to know that here are flesh and bones, the warrant of the reality of a religion which can satisfy the deepest needs of the soul of man. 'Handle Me, and see,'—it is a direction for the perplexed. The eleven could not reconcile the presence of Jesus there in the midst of them with the fact that the doors were closed. How did He come there, or was He there at all? Were they looking at something which only resembled Him, although it resembled Him exactly? They did not know; they could only wonder.

There are many men who, if they were asked what is the leading characteristic of religion in their apprehension, would answer, 'the perplexities which surround it.' To them it appears to be, beyond any other subject with which they have to deal, full of uncertainty. They do not reject, but neither do they admit, its claims. They pass weeks, months, years, in this attitude of undecision, and too often they end by dying undecided. Religion is, of course, only of value to those who heartily accept its claims; and the question arises, Why do men of this kind thus forfeit its assistance and its blessings? It may be replied by some of them that Christendom is so divided that they do not know what to believe. Very well; let them begin by believing the truths, the large body of truths, on which Christendom, with all its divisions, is altogether agreed. To believe these truths, and to act on the belief, will soon carry them further. May it not be that their perplexity is due, at least in part, to a want of serious purpose in examining the claims and substance of religion at all? Who has not felt on an August day, when a wide landscape lies stretched out under the rays of the summer sun, how everything seems to be indistinct and blurred, and then, as the spectator steadily and intensely gazes, outline and form gradually emerge from the haze—here a hill, there a wood, yonder a river, then a church tower, and a mansion, and the houses of the cottagers nestling away among the trees. Five minutes ago all of it seemed misty and indefinite; only let the eye resolutely scan it, and the harmony, as well as the features, of the prospect become clear, and all doubt as to its range, and beauty, and characteristics is quickly at an end.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Instead of being a vague, half-remembered, less than half-apprehended story, the life of Jesus, steadily meditated on, passes into the very life of the Christian, passes, by an insensible but real transfusion, into the very substance of all that is deepest and truest in the thought and heart. It illuminates, it warms, it invigorates, and by doing this, it gives that inward proof of its own reality which has been most highly prized by the most devoted of the servants of God. As of old, so now, it is true that the man is blessed whose delight is in the revealed law of the Lord, and who meditates in it day and night, who, because he meditates in it, shall be like a tree planted by the waterside. He will bring forth fruit in due season; 'his leaf also shall not wither; and look, whatever he doeth it shall prosper.'

H. P. LIDDON.

The Substantial Reality of the Risen Lord.

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. S. LUKE xxiv. 39.

THIS scene is suggestive of so many considerations that the difficulty is which to choose. There are three which, as it appears to me, claim especial attention just at present.

I. And here we see, then, first of all, our Lord's indulgent treatment of mistakes and imperfections in religious beliefs. We may venture to say that the disciples, seeing our Lord in the midst of them, ought to have recognised Him at once. They knew from long companionship with Him that there were no discoverable limits to His power over life—over nature. They knew that He had been transfigured on the mountain—that He had walked upon the sea. They knew that He had formally claimed to be Messiah by assuming the distinctive title of Messiahship—the Son of Man. They knew that He had shown to them from the Old Testament that the Messiah must suffer and rise again the third day in virtue of a prophetic necessity. They knew that, to remove all doubt, He had on more occasions than one, and very solemnly, stated that this would happen to Himself, so that when they saw Him led away to death, and expiring in agony, and laid in a tomb, they might have known what would—what must—follow. The earlier part of His prediction had been fulfilled to the letter. Did they not know enough about His power to be certain that what remained would be fulfilled as well? Now, that our Lord held His disciples to be responsible for such knowledge as this is plain from the words which He used earlier in the afternoon when talking with the two on the

Emmaus road. 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' The reproach addressed to the two disciples seems to imply that, in their case, the responsibility may have been enhanced by the enjoyment of certain opportunities which we cannot accurately measure.

But S. Mark refers to the very scene which we are considering, by saying that Jesus appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen Him after He rose from the dead. And yet, when we look to S. Luke's report of what actually took place, what tender censure it is! There is no expression which betrays grief or anger. He meets their excitement with the mildest rebuke, if it be a rebuke.

He knew—He knows—how the tyranny of sense, and of those mental habits which are formed and which are governed by the senses, holds down the aspirations of faith and love; and therefore He, the true parent and deliverer of souls, acts as one who knows of what His creatures are made. He remembers that they are but dust.

II. Here, too, we see our Lord's sanction of the principle of inquiry, upon occasion, into the very foundations of our religious belief. Certainly He said to S. Thomas, a week later, that they were blessed who had not seen His open wounds, and yet who had believed His Resurrection. But in S. Thomas's case, as a week earlier in that of the ten and their friends, He sanctions, nay, He invites, inquiry, observation, reflection. Instead of saying, 'If you cannot believe after the testimony of My prophets, after My own assurances, after the report of My disciples, that I am risen from My grave, and that you see Me before you, then begone: continue in your unbelief.' He does say, 'Use the means of inquiry which God has given you—given you now. Examine My pierced hands and feet. See for yourselves that I am He who hung upon the Cross. Nay, touch Me, if only thus you can escape from your illusion. Discover for yourselves that a body with flesh and bones is before you, with new and glorious properties, indeed, but with its substantial identity unimpaired.'

The life and death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a work of the sanctified imagination of a later age. It is just as much a part of the story of our race as the life, the victories, the assassination of Julius Cæsar. Handle it; handle it searchingly but reverently; and you will discover this for yourself. You will see that there is an intrinsic consistency, that there is a solidity, that there is a power of resistance to critical solvents, about it, which you little suspect. But do not suppose that, because it condescends to be thus tested by your understanding, as regards its reality, it is therefore within the compass of your understanding as to its scope. It begins, indeed, with that which you can appraise: it ends in that which is beyond you. While you are finite and bounded in your range of vision, it, being an unveiling of the divine Being, is divine. Yes, Christianity plants its feet firmly on the soil of earth in the life of our Lord. Its hands are seen again and again working in the stirring agencies of later history, but it rears its head upwards to the sky. It loses itself as a creed in the clouds of heaven. We see the very feet, the very hands, the reality of the one incomparable life; but we only see enough to know assuredly that there is much more which is necessarily and utterly beyond us, lost, as the Apostle puts it,—lost in 'the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God.'

III. And, once more, and lastly, see here the direction which our Lord gives to the thoughts of His perplexed disciples. He does not turn them in upon themselves. He does not take their trouble, so to speak, sympathetically to pieces, and deal with its separate elements. He does not refute, one by one, the false reasonings which were working within them. He does not say to them, 'These disquietudes, these doubts, are mere mental disorders, and the mind can cure for itself a disease which it has produced.' On the contrary, He would have them get out of themselves—out of the thick jungle of doubt and fear and hope and surmise which possesses them, and come to Him. Whatever they may think and feel, He is there, utterly independent of their doubt, independent, too, of their enthusiasm—there, in His own calm, assured, unassailable life. 'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.'

Let this, then, be our Easter work: to forget ourselves if we can, to gaze on the wounds, to clasp the feet, of our risen Lord. Water cannot rise above its level, and if the soul of man is to be restored to God it must be from without, by God Himself. It cannot—this is certain—it cannot be from within. Left to itself it lacks the life, the strength, the impetus, which it needs. It finds them in the eternal Christ. It can by faith gaze on Him even now. It can by faith handle Him and discern that He is man as well as God—God as well as man—even now. Let us, then, associate ourselves with that company in the upper chamber. Many of us, it may be, share their troubles: why should we be denied their consolations? To our weakness, to our fears, to our indolent despair, to our fruitless self-complacency, He says 'Soul, behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and discern, for a mere phantom, a spirit, hath not these flesh and bones—hath not this enduring reality which ye see Me have.'

H. P. LIDDON.

EASTER DAY

Christ's Resurrection-Life.

And in this wise shewed He Himself. S. John xxi. 1.

THE manifestations which Christ made of Himself during the forty days which He spent on the earth after His Resurrection, have in them so large an intention, and carry such a completeness, that it would be wrong and unwise in us to let this season of the Church's year quite pass by without giving them some special consideration.

The occasions on which our Lord was graciously pleased to make a distinct revelation of Himself, during His risen life, before He ascended into the heavens, were, as far as they are recorded in the Four Gospels, nine. S. Paul, indeed, in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of three appearings of Christ to His disciples, which probably, though by no means certainly, were distinct from these: one to Peter by himself; one to James; and one to five hundred brethren at once. If we add these to the incidents narrated by the Evangelists we shall have twelve express exhibitions of the risen Saviour to His Church. Even of these twelve it would be wrong to infer, because no more are mentioned, that they are the only occasions on which Jesus showed Himself. But we must confine our attention now to those nine instances which have been set before us in the history with a greater detail.

The first appearance of Christ was to Mary Magdalene in the garden—the earliest privilege awarded to the deepest penitent. The second was, as related in the twenty-eighth chapter of S. Matthew, to all the women, that is, to the two Marys and Joanna, who came together to see the sepulchre, when He commanded them to go and tell His brethren to go into Galilee and there they should see Him. The third occasion was to two disciples, Cleopas and probably Simon Peter, on their memorable walk to Emmaus. The fourth was to the ten disciples when they were assembled together without Thomas. All these four appearances occurred on the day of the Resurrection. The fifth appearance took place on the following Lord's day to the disciples assembled with Thomas. The sixth is very briefly mentioned by S. Matthew, as having taken place on the mountain in Galilee. The seventh is the one described with the greatest fulness, and is that which occurred on the lake of Galilee, when our Saviour held His touching conversation with Simon Peter. The eighth finds Him again at Jerusalem, and comprises, according to S. Luke, our Lord's last words to His disciples, when He opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures, just before He led them out to the Mount of Olives. And the ninth is the Ascension.

Over all these appearances of our blessed Lord there hangs a cloud of mystery. They are quite unlike His usual mode of holding intercourse with His followers before His death. They are so many distinct unconnected acts, each for some express purpose, and all abrupt. He comes, we know not whence, and He generally stands in the midst, we know not how. His body has in it the freedom of a spirit, and is untrammelled by the laws of material substances. His person is identical and is always identified, and yet it appears to need some sign before the recognition can take place. A tone of power pervades the whole, and while the spirit which He breathes is, if possible, more affectionate than ever, His words are evidently more commanding and authoritative. Every act and every letter seems to be the germ of some great truth, an illustration of a process, a principle which is to be developed.

We necessarily ask, Is there any key of thought which unlocks the mystery? Are there any particular intentions of comfort and instruction which God had in view for His Church in these manifestations? and are they so revealed that we may read them?

Beyond the purpose then, though that purpose is as evident as it is great, of establishing the fact of the Resurrection, by actual ocular demonstration oft-repeated, in the minds of those who were appointed to be its witnesses and publishers to the world, our Lord appears to have had other wise and tender designs in this period of His return for a little while to the earth.

And first, in respect to His Body. And here there are two things to be much observed.

It is of immense importance that we connect the crucified Body of Christ with His glorified state. Accordingly these forty days are made the strong link of identification. All the disciples are made abundantly conscious that it is the same man, Christ Jesus, with all His physical characteristics, with whom they have to do after the Resurrection, whom they loved and consorted with before it. The very wounds are all there; and by a series of exhibitions under various circumstances this proof of the entire identity of the body is carried on until He is seen, as far as the human eye could reach, soaring with it into the heavens.

Now see what this single fact contains. First, we have the sympathy of Christ as a man in all its integrity established for eternity. As a man,—reminded, if we may so speak, every moment, by His Body, of His own wants and sufferings and infirmities and pains,—He bears his fellow-feelings within the veil.

But, secondly, that wounded Body stands there not only for sympathy. See the power of the argument which is in it. Though Christ should not speak in heaven, still the intercession remains complete. Those wounds must be eloquent, and the Father must hear, and hearing must respect, and respecting must acknowledge their claim, while night and day they plead with holy persuasiveness, and cannot be silent, for man's forgiveness.

And yet beyond the sympathy and the mediation which are involved in that sameness of the Saviour's Body, how unspeakable will be the comfort and the refuge of this great truth to every believer in the day of judgment. In that great day Christ will so return as He was seen going into heaven. He will sit upon His judgment-seat, still a wounded man. And what strong confidences will be in the fact! You will turn from all your just condemnation and all your fears to that manhood of your Judge stamped with the evidences of its atoning work, and you will appeal to the prints of the nails and the spear as all your justification, and say, 'I cannot perish, Lord, I cannot be condemned,—those wounds this day are the living proofs of Thy finished work for me,—I cast myself there. I plead those scars. I hide myself in that open side.'

But while the Body of the risen and ascended Lord was thus proved by His resurrection-life to be all-sufficient in its oneness for sympathy, and for mediation, and for comfort, it was not a less important truth when it was shown at the same time by the same evidences to be no longer material but spiritual. Only once, or, at the most twice, did Christ's Body depart from the usual laws and habits of all physical nature before His death. But after his Resurrection, His life was perfectly independent of them. He moves from place to place without any apparent passage between: He is seen suddenly within shut doors, He comes abruptly and He vanishes in a moment, and though He eats, probably twice, in the presence of His disciples, to show that He still maintains His human nature, yet He does not appear to have required or received His ordinary food according to the common principles of our being.

And this establishment, again, of the possibility and of the fact of a spiritual body is of immense importance. We know nothing yet of the glorified body except from the glimpses of Tabor, and the revelations which were made to those three saints, S. Stephen, S. John, and S. Paul. But we now do know, by the demonstrations of Christ's own risen form, at least the fact that there can be, and that there is, such a thing as spiritual matter; flesh and blood spiritualised can enter into the kingdom of God. And those we love, and who are gone, shall wear the same dear forms in which we used to love to look at them. And the recognitions of another world become as clear as any other doctrine of God's word.

And to those who are labouring and often groaning, as every Christian is in this world, under the pressure of the material upon the spiritual and the daily conflict between the soul and body, and who are continually crying, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' it is no light matter to be assured that when he becomes like Christ, in another world, there will be no incongruity between the different parts of which his being will be composed, but a perfect and most enjoyable harmony, in which the outer frame will be only helpful to the spirit within, enabling it, as with wings, to serve and soar.

But the appearings of Christ after His Resurrection teach us further lessons. Doubtless they were designed to convey to the mind some idea as to the manner in which Christ should, at all times, according to His promise, visit and manifest Himself to His people.

It is a striking fact that, after He was risen, though He was forty days on earth, Christ did not once show Himself, nor make any communication whatsoever to any unconverted person. His visits were exclusively to his Church.

Secondly, observe how He showed Himself to them. Sometimes He came to one or another, separately, when he was alone—sometimes to two or three when they were in social converse—but more frequently when they were all assembled together.

Thirdly, those who from any cause especially needed Him, as, for example, Peter and Mary and Thomas, those were especially visited.

Fourthly, on one occasion the manifestation finds the disciples in their ordinary and proper vocation as fishermen; on another engaged in holy conversation; on others, and more frequently, in exercises of united devotion.

Fifthly, each manifestation is distinct and complete in itself. He is not always, visibly and palpably, with them, but the revelations are express and defined, at certain intervals, as He pleases, and as the occasion requires; and every revelation appears to have had its own particular intention.

Sixthly, He always speaks first, and is known by His speaking.

Seventhly, there is an awe about His visits, but a great delight. They all grow in sweetness and pleasurableness as they go on.

Eighthly, some reproof, almost on every occasion, mingles with great tenderness and love—and there is a remarkable individuality in all His interviews.

Ninthly, there is generally some exercise of faith at the beginning, but the visit seldom closes without some new thought and power communicated at the end.

Tenthly, all the manifestations are eminently strengthening to those who receive them; and, in the majority of cases, they are wound up to some practical duty.

Eleventhly, it is evident in all, that Christ Himself is His children's all-sufficient happiness; and that to know Him, to converse with Him, to love Him, to work for Him, is life, life indeed, communion indeed.

All these circumstances, and others of a similar character which might be adduced, are deeply significant to us of the precise method in which it is the intention of Christ to come to His people, to comfort and refresh them, in all ages even to the end. Just as before His Crucifixion, He was pleased upon the margin of eternity to pause, and give us in the seventeenth chapter of S. John, a most beautiful earnest and example of His eternal intercession, so I believe He returned to this world, after His death, in part at least, that He might give us most assuring tokens of the manner and the tenderness and the power with which it was in His mind to fulfil His own promise continually. 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.'

But in these most instructive incidents, which we are considering, there is a further lesson which we must not omit. Our Saviour in this interval between the grave and glory—an interval of which the deep intention can never be fathomed—seems to have proposed to Himself the design to show how faithfully He would fulfil all His engagements for His Church. So that we may trace a constant correspondence and parallel between the words He spoke and the promises He made before His death, and the acts He did after His Resurrection. And this parallel, of which the beginning is shown us there, is to run on for ever and ever.

Thus, did Christ during His life again and again assure His followers that they were His brethren—that whoever should do His will would be to Him as a father, a mother, a brother, a sister? did He love the image of the family, and lead on their minds to the thought, 'In my Father's house are many mansions'? Then see the accurate counterpart to these thoughts after the Resurrection in almost His first words to Mary Magdalene, and then to the three women, 'Go to My brethren and tell them I ascend to My Father and your Father,—to My God and your God.'

'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them'—this was the undertaking; now see the fulfilment: two disciples are going to Emmaus, speaking of Jesus, when 'Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.' The little company of believers are gathered together in the upper room on the Lord's day evening, when, just as they were occupied in their minds about Him, 'while they spake these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst and saith unto them'—and what did He say?—His legacy before He died had been peace—'Peace I leave with you.' Now He is the executor of His own testament, and at least four times He makes over and gives and apportions His own bequest, 'Peace be unto you.'

'I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice,' was His promise; and 'did not their hearts burn within them when He talked with them by the way?'

'Thou shalt know hereafter'; 'He shall teach you all things'—this was the spirit of the prophecy; how true its echo! 'Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.'

'He shall reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Me.' The Spirit was already speaking in Him when He redeemed the pledge, and 'upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.'

'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?—feed My sheep.'

'Father'—He had prayed for His Church's sake—'Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.' That was the prayer. Now behold the answer, 'All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.'

'Ye shall receive power,' were His words; His act, 'He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'

He came heralded with the title, 'They shall call His name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us'; and the latest words He uttered, when all His work was done, before He returned to His glory were, 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

So the two parallels run. There is a third parallel—that parallel runs within a man. God grant that it may go on in the manifestations, the presence, the indwelling of the same unchangeable Saviour, in your hearts,—through life, in death, and into eternity.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

EASTER DAY

The Spiritual Body.

For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 2 Corinthians v. 1-4.

I. THE difficulty in the way of belief in immortality has always been to get it presented before the imagination.

Everywhere it has been suspected that something would survive death; but this has been practically inoperative.

Outside of Christianity, progress in knowledge has always tended to take away hope.

2. The real problem is to find a basis for life after the material body shall be broken up.

Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition of life; *i.e.* 'Correspondence with environment.'

e.g. A fish—a bird—a man—the ascending scale in power of adaptability.

But even man, the most flexible, sooner or later loses his nice adjustment and falls into physical ruin.

Even if this could be avoided, the system in which he lives has doom written upon it.

3. It is plain, then, that if any organism is to live on, it can only be by establishing relations with an environment which is eternal (Drummond, *Natural Law*, etc., p. 230).

This is the 'scientific' statement of immortality.

On Mr. Spencer's lips it means only a barren speculation.

S. Paul transforms it into a fact by revealing a vehicle for the spirit, which is independent of any possible cosmical change, *i.e.* the spiritual body!

The truth that the human soul is in possession of more than one body.

It is capable of gathering to itself a body in any possible condition of existence.

II. Practically, Do all possess this faculty? Plainly, Yes; Christ brought it to light.

1. It is largely modifiable by moral influences.

2. The general purpose of Christianity is to keep this side open.

He would take a life, and move it towards 'the Heavenlies.'

The subject protests, and says, 'No, there is no thoroughfare.'

But there is no security in this position.

It turns life into a cavern, wherein are echoes.

S. D. M'CONNELL.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Unbelief of Thomas.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed : blessea are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. S. JOHN xx. 29.

THOMAS'S scepticism, and his proposed test.

When the time came to apply the test, he did not care for it, but believed on other grounds.

What will produce faith here when it is lacking?

(It is always lacking in vividness.)

'Blessed is he who not having seen,' etc. : is this a benediction upon credulity?

Who are the heirs of the benediction?

I. The disciples were misled by their own observation; assuming, like other men, that their experience was exhaustive.

They supposed it to be natural for all men, including Him, to die.

(The notion that Death is universal conqueror; a precipice over which the stream of humanity falls at last.)

This is not true; the triumph rests with life.

Since the first primordial germ planted by God on the bald, bare, newly-cooled earth, life has persistently grown, spread, conquered.

Christ the first-fruits of a new order achieved.

Jesus was not an exception, a prodigy, in overcoming death, but the first-fruits of a natural order.

So that, not having seen, I am prepared to believe, because it is intrinsically probable.

II. But the objection is urged that things are not seen to turn out as they ought, if this view be true.

[The natural progress of human existence ought to pass from stage to stage easily, without shock.

Death should be seen to be an apotheosis.

But the contrary is the fact.

It is shock, surprise, fear.]

This lack of agreement between theory and observed fact is confessed; but my faith in the truth is steadied when the scientific explanation of the discrepancy is pointed out; *i.e.* the sting of death is sin!

It is so, not as involving penalty, but as importing doubt of recovery.

Sin is the disturbing element; deranging function, stopping movement.

III. Jesus therefore, being free from sin, survived death naturally, as was to be expected.

(Notice the entire absence of surprise in the witnesses.)

1. He has taken the 'sting' out of death.
2. He has in some way bound men to His fortunes.

The pathetic way in which the instinct of the race fastens upon the new hope which His Resurrection imports.

The dream of the poet, the burden of the seer, the prophetic conscience of the priest, the harmony of the artist, and the clamour of stricken love, all find their rest and stay in Him, in whom, not having seen, they yet believe. S. D. M'CONNELL.

The Inevitableness of Christ's Resurrection.

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. Acts ii. 24.

THIS is the language of the first Christian Apostle in the first sermon that ever was preached in the Church of Christ. S. Peter is accounting for the miraculous gift of languages on the day of Pentecost; and, after observing that it was, after all, only a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel about the out-pouring of the Spirit in the last days, he proceeds to trace it to its cause. It was the work, he says, of Jesus Christ now ascended into heaven. 'He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' But Jesus Christ, he argues, had really ascended into heaven, because He had first really risen from His grave; and it is to S. Peter's way of accounting for Christ's Resurrection that I invite your attention, as being the first apostolic statement on the subject that was given to the world.

I. First of all, then, S. Peter states the fact that Christ had risen from the dead. 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death.'

S. Peter preached the Resurrection as a fact, and, as we know, with great and immediate results. But how did he account for the Resurrection? What was the reason which he gave for its having happened at all?

II. S. Peter says that Christ was raised from the dead because it was not possible that He should be holden of death. Thus you will observe that S. Peter's thought about this matter is the very opposite to that of many persons in our day. They say, in so many words, that no evidence will convince them that Christ has risen, because they hold it to be antecedently impossible that He should rise. S. Peter, on the other hand, almost speaks as if he could dispense with evidence, so certain is he that Jesus Christ must rise. In point of fact, as we know, S. Peter had his own experience to fall back upon. He had seen his risen Master on the day of the Resurrection, and often since; but so far was this evidence of his senses from causing him any perplexity, that it only fell in with the anticipations which he had now formed on other and independent grounds. It was not possible, he says, that Christ should be holden or imprisoned by death.

Observe how S. Peter deals with the subject. He looks at it, if I may so speak, from above rather than from below. He asks himself what his existing faith about the Son of God points to, rather than what history proves to have taken place. He is, for the moment, more concerned for the honour of his Master, than for the value and significance of His acts for us. To S. Peter it is less strange that there should be an innovation upon nature, like the resurrection of a dead body, than it would be if a being like Jesus Christ, having been put to death, did not rise. S. Peter is very far from being indifferent to the proof of the fact that He did rise. He often insists upon this proof; but just as S. John calls Christ's miracles His works, meaning by that that they were just what such a Being might be expected to perform, so S. Peter treats His Resurrection from the dead as perfectly natural to Him—as an event which any man or angel, with sufficient knowledge, might have calculated beforehand, just as astronomers predict unerringly the movements of the heavenly bodies. 'God hath raised Jesus from the dead,' he says, 'because it was impossible that death should continue to hold Him.' The buried Christ could not remain in His grave. He was raised from it in virtue of a divine necessity, and this necessity, while in its original form it is strictly proper to His case, points to kindred necessities which affect His servants and His church.

Let us, in conclusion, briefly consider them.

III. See, first, the impossibility for us Christians, too, of being buried for ever in the tomb in which we shall be laid at death. We, too, shall rise: we must rise. In this, as in other matters, as He is, so are we in this world. To us as to Him, although in a different way, God has pledged Himself. There is a difference, indeed, such as might be expected, between our case and His. In Him an eternal vital force, beside the voice of prophecy, made resurrection from the dead necessary. In us there is no such intrinsic force—only a powerful guarantee to us from without. He could say of the temple of His body, 'I will raise it up in three days.' We can only say that God will raise us up, we know not when. But this we do know—that 'if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.' This we do know—that 'we all must be manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad. The law of justice and the law of love combine to create a necessity which requires a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

See, too, here the principle of the many resurrections in the Church of Christ. As with the bodies of the faithful, so it is with the Body of the Redeemer.

And we have here, lastly, what should be the governing principle of our own personal lives. If we have been laid in the tomb of sin, it ought to be impossible that we should be holden of it. I say 'ought to be,' because, as a matter of fact, it is not impossible. God only is responsible for the resurrection of His Son, for the resurrection of the Christian's body, for the perpetuity through its successive resurrections of the Christian Church: and therefore it is impossible that either one or the other of these should permanently succumb to the empire of death. But God who raises our bodies, whether we will or not, does not raise our souls from sin without our corresponding with His grace; and it is quite in our power to refuse this necessary correspondence. That we should rise, then, from sin is a moral, it is not a physical, necessity; but surely we ought to make it as real a necessity as if it were physical. For any man who feels in his soul the greatness and the love of Jesus Christ, it ought to be morally impossible to remain in this tomb. 'Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' If Lent is the time for mourning the past, Easter is the time for bracing, definite resolutions—for vigorous efforts which shall control the future. If we were unaided and alone, such efforts and resolutions would be failures, in that they would be like the vain flutterings of a bird against the wires of the cage which imprisons it. But He who has broken the gates of brass and smitten the bars of iron in sunder will not fail us if we seek His strength, and the permanence and the splendour of His life in glory may, and should be, the warrant of our own.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Natural Immortality of the Human Soul.

Because I live, ye shall live also. S. JOHN xiv. 19.

THIS saying of our Lord in the supper-room, like so much else which He uttered there, is only to be understood in the light of His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. When He said, 'Because I live,' He had death immediately before Him. He was taking the measure of death. Death was to be no real interruption of His ever-continuing life. Death with all its physical, its mental miseries —death was only an incident in His being; it was in no sense its close. Already He sees the Resurrection beyond, and He exclaims, 'I live.' It was not possible, as S. Peter puts it, that He, the Prince of Life, should be holden of death. And so He treats death as an already vanquished enemy which cannot have any lasting effect upon His indestructible life. And, further, this life of His, inaccessible as it was to any permanent injury—enduring, as it was to endure, beyond the Cross and the grave—is the cause of ours. 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' He describes what He knows to be impending: 'Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more.' He would be hidden away in the grave from the eyes of men. He adds, 'but ye see Me.' His disciples would see Him; first, with their bodily eyes during the forty days after His Resurrection, and next with the eyes of faith throughout all the ages until He comes to judgment; and thus 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Assured of the enduring continuity of His life, the disciples might be certain—quite certain—of their own. Because He lives after His Resurrection—after His Ascension—in the life of glory, therefore the disciples, in whatever sense, shall live also.

I. Now here let us observe, first of all, what our Saviour's words do not mean. They do not mean that the immortality of the soul of man is dependent upon the redemptive work or upon the glorified life of Jesus Christ. Man is an immortal being, just as he is a thinking and a feeling being, by the original terms of his nature. God has made man immortal, whether for weal or woe. Whether man is redeemed or not, whether he is sanctified or not, he will exist for ever. God might have made man a being subject to annihilation. He has given him a soul which is indestructible; and this quality of the soul of man is just as much a part of man's nature as are the limbs of his body or the peculiarities of his mind. Of late we have heard something of a phrase, new, if I mistake not, to Christian ears—'conditional immortality.' We are told that man is not immortal by the terms of his nature; that he may become immortal if he is saved by Christ. Unredeemed man—man in a state of nature, so we are told —becomes extinct, if not at death, yet very shortly afterwards, when anything that may survive death will fade away into nothingness. This, it is said, is more in keeping with what we see around us than the old Christian doctrine that every human being will necessarily exist, in whatever condition, for ever. Everything around us changes, decays, passes away; and this dissolution of all the organised forms of matter seems, it is suggested, to forewarn man of his own approaching and complete destruction, unless, indeed, some superhuman power should take him by the hand and confer on him that gift of immortality which, in virtue of his own nature, he does not possess. Some of the persons who talk and think thus forget that the New Testament treats man as a being who will live after death, continuously on, whether in happiness or in woe. And others forget that before our Lord came the best and most thoughtful men in the old heathen world were satisfied of this truth.

II. And this brings us to consider what our Lord's words do mean: what is the kind of life which we Christians do, or should, live because Christ our Saviour on His throne in heaven lives it? Clearly something is meant by life in such passages as this which is higher than, which is beyond, mere existence—not merely beyond animal existence, but beyond the existence, the mere existence, of a spiritual being. We English use life in our popular language in this sense of an existence which is not merely dormant, or inert, or unfruitful, but which has a purpose of some sort and which makes the most of itself; and the Greeks had a particular word to describe the true life of man—man's highest spiritual energy—a word to which our Lord, either in language or, more probably, by some marked modulation of His voice must have used an equivalent in the Eastern dialect which He actually employed. This is the word employed when our Lord says, 'I am the life,' and when S. Paul says, 'Christ who is our life.' And thus in the present passage our Lord does not say, 'Because I exist ye shall exist also,' but He does say, 'Because I live ye shall live also.' This life is existence in its best and its highest aspects: the existence of a being who makes the most of his endowments; who consciously directs them towards their true purpose and object; in whom they are invigorated, raised, transfigured, by the presence of some new power—by the operations of grace. This enrichment and elevation of being is derived—that is the point—from Christ our Lord. He is the author of this new life, just as our first parent is the source of our first natural existence. On this account S. Paul calls our Lord the second Adam, implying that He would have a relation towards the human race in some remarkable way resembling that of our first parent; and, in point of fact, Christ is the parent of a race of spiritual men who push human life to its higher—some of them to its highest—capacities of excellence, just as Adam is the parent of a race of natural men who do what they can or may with their natural outfit. 'The second Adam'—remember that title of our Lord Jesus Christ. As natural human existence is derived from Adam, so spiritual or supernatural life is given to already existing men, from and by our Lord Jesus Christ. 'As we have borne the image of the earthly, we must also bear the image of the heavenly.' When our Lord was upon the earth He communicated this life to man by coming in contact with men. What is said of Him on one occasion in reference to a particular miracle, is true of His whole appearance upon the earth—'Virtue went out of Him.' A common way of describing this is to say that He produced an impression deeper and more lasting than has any who has ever worn our human form. Most certainly He did this. He acted, He spoke; and His looks and gestures and bearing were themselves a vivid and most persuasive language; and men observed and listened. They had never seen, they had never heard, anything like it. They felt the contagion of a presence, the influence of which they could not measure—a presence from which there radiated a subtle mysterious energy which was gradually taking possession of them, they knew not exactly how, and making them begin to live a new and higher life. What that result was upon four men of very different casts of character we may gather from the reports of the life of Christ which are given us by the four holy evangelists. But at last He died, and rose, and disappeared from sight into the heavens, and it is of this aftertime that He says, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'

How does He now communicate His life when He is out of reach of the senses—when the creative stimulus of His visible presence has been withdrawn?

The answer is, first, by His Spirit. What had been partly visible has now to be a wholly invisible process. The Spirit of Christ—that divine and personal force whereby the mind and nature of our invisible Saviour is poured into the hearts and minds and characters of men—was to be the Lord and giver of this life to the end of time. 'He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.' And, therefore, 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His'; and, therefore, 'if any man be in Christ,' through being baptized into this one Spirit, 'he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

And, secondly, the means whereby the Spirit of Christ does especially convey Christ's life are the Christian sacraments.

Let us be up and doing. Let us look to the sources of our true outfit for the eternal world. Let us make the most of them. Our immortality is certain. But what sort of an immortality is it to be? That is a question before which all else that touches ourselves fades away into utter insignificance. That is a question which can be only well and satisfactorily answered by a soul which hastens to draw water from the wells of salvation—which, having itself heard the words uttered as of old over the sinner, 'Thy sins which are many are forgiven,' still kneels on in persevering love at the feet of the divine Master to receive from Him the supplies and the strength which are assuredly needful for the life eternal, and to hear more and more clearly, as the closing scene draws nigh, the divine promise, 'Because I live, thou shalt live also.'

H. P. LIDDON.

EASTER DAY

Resurrection and Divinity.

Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead. ROMANS i. 3, 4.

A GREAT festival of the Christian Church like Easter appears to have one drawback attending it from which days of less importance are comparatively free. It offers us so much to think about, that unless we try to make some one of the lessons which it teaches our own, it may pass by without leaving us the wiser or the better for taking part in it. The rays of truth which flash forth from a fact like the Resurrection of our Lord are so many and so bright, that if we do not fix our minds upon some one of them, and do what we can to understand its importance, we may only be dazzled into bewilderment by the splendid whole, and may carry away with us nothing that will afterwards shape our thoughts or influence our lives. And here S. Paul comes to our assistance by suggesting at the beginning of his greatest epistle a point which may well engage our attention—namely, the bearing of the Resurrection on the divinity of our Lord. Among other things, the Resurrection, he tells us, did this: it threw a special light on the higher nature of Jesus Christ, who was declared to be 'the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead.'

Now let us note for a moment that in the passage before us S. Paul summarily describes the contents of the Gospel, and says that it was wholly concerned with our Lord Jesus Christ and with two facts about Him more especially. The first fact, that He was really man with a human body and a human soul; this was due to His being a member of a particular and well-known Jewish family. 'According to the flesh,' that is in respect to His human nature, He was 'born of the seed of David.' The second fact was, that although man He was more than man, 'according to the spirit of holiness'—that is, in respect of His higher and superhuman nature, He was declared to be the Son of God. The phrase, 'According to the spirit of holiness,' in the second clause, corresponds to and contrasts with the phrase, 'according to the flesh,' in the first clause; and as the flesh in this passage certainly means human nature, and not, as often, the corrupt or animalised principle in human nature, so 'the spirit of holiness' means not the third person in the Godhead who sanctifies us, but the higher or divine nature of Christ somewhat vaguely described and set over against His human nature. For this less common use of the word 'spirit' we have a warrant in two other passages of the New Testament at least, and the resulting sense is, that as our Lord was seen to be truly human by the fact of His birth in the family of David, so the true import and character of His higher nature became apparent when He rose from the dead.

Here, then, is open to us a subject of the highest interest on this greatest of Christian festivals, when the Church throughout the world stands around the empty sepulchre, proclaiming that Christ is risen from the dead. For here we are taught by the Apostle tc think of that Resurrection not only as a reversal of the humiliation and defeat which had preceded it, not only as the certificate of the mission of the greatest Teacher of religion to mankind, but as something more—as a declaration, or, more precisely, a definition of what in respect of His superhuman nature our Lord really was and is. The Resurrection was not only a wonder, it was an instruction, it was the means of making it plain to all who had spiritual eyes to see, that He who rose was much more than the first of prophets and apostles, that He was no less than the only begotten Son of God who had shared God's throne and His nature from all eternity.

I. That which the Apostle's words may first of all suggest to us is the importance of events. He attributes, you observe, to a single event the power of setting forth a great truth, just as though the event were a speaker or a book. Christ, he says, was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection from the dead. Undoubtedly, events are for God what language is for man. They are the manner, the means whereby God reveals His mind and will. Events are the language of God written on the pages of human history, whether it be the history of a man or of a family or of a nation or of the world. Just as God's eternal power and Godhead are, according to the Apostle, clearly understood by reverent study of the book of Nature, 'the things that are made,' as he calls it, so the judgments which are formed in the divine mind on men, on families, on nations, are discoverable in the book of human history, as they are written in the language of events. This, of course, must appear an unreasonable statement to those who imagine that all that happens to mankind—birth and death, sickness and health, good and bad seasons, national prosperity and national decline—are the results of blind forces which exist, why we know not, wherefore we know not, but which have, it seems, somehow given us existence only that, like the seaweed that is tossed this way or that on the surf of the wave, we may illustrate their relentless power and our own abject helplessness. But it will not appear unreasonable to any man who sincerely believes in a living God, in a God whose rules of working are not His masters, nor yet powers which, after owing to Him their being, have somehow escaped from His control, but only the free manifestations by Himself of that order which is the rule of His life. He Himself is every where present, everywhere and incessantly intelligent and at work, so that by Him the hairs of our head are all numbered, and without Him not a sparrow falls to the ground. To believe in a living God is to believe that events which He brings about or permits are a declaration of His mind. But then, whether the characters in which His mind is thus declared are always legible by man or by all men is quite another question. Sometimes, indeed, they are written in a familiar alphabet; their meaning is so clear that all men may read it. All who believed that the world is governed by a moral god understood what was meant by the fall of Babylon, by the capture of Rome by Alaric, by the close of the career of Napoleon. Sometimes they are written in characters as wholly unintelligible to all living men as were the Egyptian hieroglyphics half a century ago, though they may be read by the higher intelligences around the throne in heaven, or they may be read hereafter on earth, for all that we know, by highly endowed souls. And in the book of history there is much written of this kind which eludes the efforts of man's inquisitive and constant gaze. But sometimes also the meaning of God's writing in events is hidden from the mass of men at first sight, but becomes plain to them when the key of its interpretation has been given them by some competent instructor, like the 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,' traced on the wall of the banqueting chamber of the Eastern monarch, the sense of which was plain when a Daniel had been summoned to decipher it. Of such handwriting as this, too, history is full; but we must not linger on it, since we have to fix our attention on one great example of it in one particular event, the Resurrection of our Lord.

II. But in our Lord's case the Resurrection did not stand alone. It is abstractedly conceivable that the foolish or bad might be raised from the dead with superhuman power; one day, we Christians know, they will be, in order to give account of the things done in the body. In our Lord's case Resurrection from the dead was combined with absolute holiness and wisdom, with words such as never man spake, with a life that none who had witnessed it could convict of sin—in short, with a manifestation of truth and goodness which had never before been offered to the human conscience. The Resurrection was the fitting complement to the life and teaching of our Lord; it confirmed the anticipations which that life and teaching naturally raised; it was the countersign in the sphere of physical being of a judgment which had already been formed in the sphere of instructed conscience. Had our Lord lived and taught and then rotted in His grave, even His life would have died away in time from the memories of men. Had He risen—it is an impossible supposition—without having lived His life, His Resurrection would have been merely a blank wonder, appealing only to imagination, and saying nothing to the sense of right and truth. As it is, it proclaimed to all the world what disciples like S. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi had owned before at their Master's feet; it proclaimed that He who was crucified, dead, and buried, is the Son of God, declared to be such by His Resurrection from the dead.

But the Apostle says that the declaration of the Divine Sonship of Christ which was made by the Resurrection was made 'with power.' The Resurrection did not hesitatingly suggest that our Lord might possibly be the Son of God; it amounted, when taken together with His life and character and teaching, to a demonstration irresistible and overwhelming, at least to the Apostle himself, that He was the Son of God. I say, to the Apostle himself, because, looking at the connection of the passage, it is scarcely open to doubt that the expression 'with power' points first of all to a personal experience. Saul of Tarsus, at that time an active young rabbi in Jerusalem strongly attached to the cause of the Pharisee party, was not one of the privileged company to whom our risen Redeemer showed Himself during the great forty days. As an unconverted Jew he would have looked at the person and work of Jesus through an atmosphere discoloured by false reports and by implacable controversial passions. For Saul the rabbi, Jesus was only a Teacher who had established for Himself in the mind of the educated many the character and authority of a prophet whose influence was steadily directed against that of the representatives of the established order of things in Jerusalem, and who had only met with His deserts when He was put to a cruel death by the Roman authority. The tragedy of Calvary, no doubt, he would have said at the time, would be a nine days' wonder, and other persons and events of interest would come to the front, and all would be forgotten. Nor would this have been disturbed by the rumours which may have reached Saul's ears that there had been one or more apparitions of Jesus after His death. Saul's robust scepticism would have whispered to itself that rumours of this kind were only to be expected among the credulous and disappointed followers whom Jesus had misled, and that they were not deserving of serious consideration; and so he would have gone his way, in his bitter sincerity even going so far as to place himself at the disposal of the persecuting party, not his own, which filled the highest places of the Jewish priesthood, and to take a foremost part in the cruelties by which it was hoped to stamp out the very name of the infant Church. Then came the journey to Damascus, and that scene among the low hills of the desert some few miles from the city gate, which was to change the foremost persecutor of Christ into the most devoted of His flock. And what was it that that scene brought home with irresistible power to the mind of Saul of Tarsus? Many truths, no doubt, but this pre-eminently, that Jesus, of whom he had dreamed as stricken and silenced for ever in the stillness of the tomb, was alive and ruling men and events from the clouds of heaven. And how and since what date this had come to be, Saul would have learnt from Ananias at Damascus, and still more so when he went to Jerusalem to see S. Peter, and S. James, and S. Thomas, and the penitent Magdalen, and the two disciples who walked to Emmaus, and as many as he would passing through Galilee, and those five hundred who had seen the risen Lord on one single occasion. On the great fact there was evidence enough and to spare, if only there was the mind open to receive it; and when the fact that Jesus who was crucified had thus risen from the dead was established in the mind of S. Paul as a certainty beyond all discussion, how inevitably would it have changed his whole way of looking at all else about Jesus! It was, then, Jesus, and not himself and his instructors, who held the truth according to those ancient Scriptures; it was the teaching of Jesus, and not that of the rabbinical schools, which followed on in the direct line of Moses and the prophets. Those miracles of Jesus of which he had heard, were only what might be expected from the Messianic prophecies; and this crowning wonder of all which Jesus had predicted as designed to follow on His death, lifted yet further and more completely the veil that hung before the eyes of the astonished and humble rabbi, and showed that He who could thus make the past and the present alike minister to His glory, He who could rule at once in the conscience of men, and mould at pleasure the forces on high, He who could bend into utter submission the mind and the will of His stoutest adversary, must be indeed of more than human stature, must be indeed divine. To S. Paul the Resurrection was a revelation of the divinity of the Son of God made with power. It would be for S. Paul, and much more we may believe for those who saw the risen Redeemer once and again, conversed with Him, ate with Him, touched Him. Such certainly was the effect on the Apostle who was, it might seem, naturally of a sceptical turn of mind. Although, as our collect says, for the greater confirmation of the faith he was doubtful of Christ's Resurrection, what was S. Thomas's exclamation when our Lord offered His hands and His side to the inquisitive touch of the Apostle? 'My Lord and my God!' Those five wounds in the risen Body were a revelation not of Christ's Manhood only, but of His Deity. They proclaimed the veiled power that had conquered death. And so it has been ever since. The Resurrection has been felt to be the fact which, beyond all others, proclaims Christ to man as the Son of God. When Judas had gone his way, the important requisite in his successor was that he was to be a witness to the Resurrection. The Resurrection was the burden of all the recorded preaching of the earliest Church; the Gospel it preached was the Gospel of the Resurrection, whether in the mouth of S. Peter or S. Stephen or S. Paul, it was all the same. And at this moment all who think seriously on the matter know that the Resurrection is the point at which the creed which carries us to the faith of heaven is most clearly imbedded in the soil of earth; most really capable of asserting a place for its divine and living subject in the history of our race. Disprove the Resurrection, and Christianity fades away into thin air as a graceful, but discredited illusion. But as a certain fact, it does its work as at the first in every honest conscience and intellect. More than any other event, it proclaims Christ to be the Son of God with power in millions of Christian souls.

III. No one can read the epistles of S. Paul without observing that he constantly speaks of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection not only as events in the life of Jesus upon earth, but as spiritual transactions which take place within the Christian soul or character. He bids Christians to 'crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.' He says of himself, 'I am crucified with Christ'; and addressing his readers at Ephesus, he quotes a Christian hymn of the earliest age, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' He exclaims in his Epistle to his Colossian friends, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' It is true that this language of S. Paul is more particularly connected with the entrance of new converts into the Church of Christ by baptism. Conversion involved a crucifixion of the old corrupt nature, and then, as the new convert was dipped beneath the baptismal waters and raised again by the minister of the sacraments, he was, in S. Paul's words, 'buried with Christ in baptism, and raised again to newness of life.' But although that is the first and more usual application of the Apostle's language, his language also applies to the circumstances of the altered life of baptized Christians who have fallen from God and from grace, and need to return to God by a fresh conversion. If the Body of Christ could only rise once from the grave, the Christian soul may certainly need to rise a second time; may, after a fall from grace, need such a resurrection, unless all is to be lost. And when such an event in the moral or spiritual world takes place, it is strange if they who look on do not learn from it something that they had not known before about the Son of God. Is it nothing that a soul should lie in the grave of sin, and then, touched by a mighty inspiring voice bidding it arise and live, should pass forth to a new life, redeemed and purified? So it has been sometimes in youth, sometimes in middle life, sometimes in declining years, almost within sight of death, with men of the most opposite characters, and the most various positions, whose experiences of sin have been as unlike as possible. So it was in one age with Augustine, at once a man of cultivation and a libertine, whom one verse of the Apostle S. Paul made a saint and teacher of the Church; so it was with the profligate Earl of Rochester in the days of the Restoration. So in our own time with the popular French atheist Taxil, who a few years ago devoted his whole time to propagating blasphemy against his Creator and Redeemer. So with Littré, the polished man of letters, from whose mental atmosphere, almost until the last hour had come, God was utterly shut out by a false philosophy. For each of these—the profligate young philosopher, the debauched courtier, the atheistic lecturer, the refined but godless man of letters—God had His purpose and His hour of mercy, and each accepted it. You may some of you have known men, the bearers of less famous names than these, or living in private life, who have been the subjects of the spiritual Resurrection. We may see the dead souls joined to bodies of activity and vigour, joined to minds of intelligence and force, but not on that account the less dead. Such a soul lies in the grave of sin; it is blind, deaf, dumb, motionless, cold, and putrid; it sees not the works of God in providence and life, His mercies, His judgments; it hears not the warnings of God in His Word, in His Church, in His inward appeals to conscience; it speaks not to God in prayer; it has neither the clear-sightedness nor the heart to pray; it is cold, so cold as to strike into every faculty a deadly chill, and, like Lazarus, it has already passed into a state of moral putrefaction, so long has it lain in the grave. And when such a soul hears the voice of the Son of God, when its eyes are open to behold His justice and His love, when it opens its ears to His warnings and His promises, when it opens its mouth to pray and to praise Him as the Author, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier of his life, when such a soul exchanges its corruption for purity, its coldness for the glow of warm affections, bursts the bondages of habit and passes forth through the barriers that would fain detain it into light and freedom; when men around behold this, and note further how in such a soul risen and beautified love has taken the place of hatred, joy of sullen discontent, peace of restlessness, and long-suffering of an impatience with others and with God that knew no bounds, and faith of a distrust alike of man and of God, and temperance of a perfect chaos of insurgent passions—when they see the man who dwelt yesterday among the graves, sitting to-day among the pure, clothed and in his right mind, and ask, 'Who has done it? Who has thus changed that which offers to his will a much more stubborn resistance than the dust of a buried corpse, or the stone which closes the mouth of the sepulchre?' it is clear what must be the answer—who but He who, at the grave of Bethany, announced Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, and bade Lazarus come forth from his tomb, and whose own Resurrection is not merely an outward power to mould our thoughts, but an inward power to transform our very souls and characters? When the old Christians whom Saul of Tarsus had so cruelly wronged beheld his converted life, his clear intelligence, his warm affections, his true and strong will all placed at the service of the Saviour whom he but now had persecuted, what did they do? He himself shall answer, 'They glorified God in me.' And when in the Church of our day a soul rises from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, there goes forth—oh, be sure of it—into hundreds and thousands of consciences around the proclamation of the divine power of the Son of God. God grant that this Easter the heart of the risen and glorified Jesus may be gladdened by many such a moral resurrection, and that we who witness it, and through His grace experience it, may know more and more surely, to our endless peace, who He is and what He can do.

H. P. LIDDON.

Early Visits to the Tomb.

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.
S. Luke xxiv. 5, 6.

It will be pleasant, and I hope profitable, if we linger a little to-night in the garden near the tomb.

From Friday evening to the early Sunday morning, a period which, being parts of three days, would, according to the Jewish mode of speaking, be strictly called three days, but which was still the very shortest period that could be called three days, for God had a 'desire to the work of His own hands,' Jesus's Godhead had tenanted the new tomb. New, I conceive, lest, any one having been buried in the same grave before, it might be thought that Jesus was quickened by that dead man's bones, as in the case of the man placed in Elisha's sepulchre. In that new tomb, situated in the garden close to the spot of the crucifixion, on the north-west of Jerusalem, the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus had carefully laid Him.

It was quite accordant with the spirit of S. John, that he should be the evangelist to record the three traits which are left us of that remarkable growing believer, Nicodemus—first, coming to Jesus a timid, but a sincere inquirer, under cover of the night; next, standing up before the Sanhedrim with his modest but pointed question, 'Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?' and so exposing himself to the bitter taunt, 'Art thou also of Galilee?'—and now, in beautiful manifestation of the expanding principle of divine grace, doing the bravest act which a man could do in the whole world for his Master, and coming boldly with his friend Joseph to Pilate, to ask the Body of Jesus, and bringing with him, in the largeness of his heart, a whole hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes.

In that compound of myrrh and aloes, the body was placed, doubtless with a view of preventing any incipient decay before there would be the opportunity of a more careful embalming. That work of embalming was evidently the thought which at that time filled the souls of the holy women. We must all see the naturalness and the beauty of that feeling.

Who the women were is not quite certain. But among them we find Mary Magdalene, always placed first; Mary the mother of James and Joses, who was the wife of Cleophas or Alpheus, and who was also the sister of Jesus' Mother; Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, probably the richest in the little sisterhood. Mary the Mother of Jesus is never mentioned in any connection with the tomb. We are left to suppose that when Christ commended her to the care of John, that disciple, in his tender consideration, led her at once off the ground, and that literally 'from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home.'

Two at least of these women—the two Marys—saw Joseph and Nicodemus perform the burial, while they sat—the posture of Jewish mourning—while they sat over against the sepulchre.

Strong, however, as was the desire in the women's heart to do the last sweet office of embalming that Body, of which they knew no other than that it would follow the usual laws of mortality, they judged, and judged rightly, that the force of a positive command was greater than the obligation to execute that work of love. And consequently, they waited till the Sabbath was over, that is, till the first stars appeared on Saturday evening, about seven o'clock, and then they went to purchase the spices.

But we must observe that properly speaking, the Body of Jesus never was enbalmed. It was the simple act of God that it saw no corruption.

'Very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun,' as S. Mark says, or as S. Matthew has it, at 'the dawn,' or S. John, 'early, when it was yet dark,' the women hastened on their errand to the tomb. Two of them at least had seen Joseph and Nicodemus roll—the expression marks difficulty—roll the great stone, on which afterwards the seal of the Roman Empire was set, to the mouth of the tomb.

The tomb was a cave, running horizontally into the rock. And it is a simple touch, very faithful to nature, when the historian tells us that, as the women went up the hill, they 'were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone?'

But meanwhile, in stillness, in darkness, and in solitude, earlier than the earliest, God had been working in His own magnificence. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, like every other greatest transaction recorded in our salvation was the distinct act of each Person in the Holy Trinity.

Unquestionably, the Father aided. S. Peter tells us that He was quickened, or raised, by the Holy Ghost; and we have His own word that He raised Himself. But if we had to state it generally, we should say that, by the power of His own inherent Deity, which never died and could not die, but was as real and perfect all the while Jesus slept in the tomb as it is now that He sits in the heavens, Jesus for the glory of the Father, through the Holy Ghost, raised His own Body to life again.

Where the soul of Jesus had spent the interval, we may not too confidently affirm. In hell certainly; that is to say, in hell, according to the ancient and true use of that word—the place of all departed spirits. And in that part of hell, certainly, which is called Paradise, because we have His own words for it to the thief, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

But we conceive it quite in harmony with His own nature and being, to believe that during that time He was not idle, but carrying on some high mission of love and mercy; and that the literal acceptation of S. Peter's words is best, and that He did go and preach, in that intermediate state, to the spirits of the antediluvian world, performing there, in honour of His Cross, some work of mercy—we know not what—probably unprecedented and unfollowed.

But to return to the garden and the tomb. Though the Three Persons of the Eternal Godhead wrought the Resurrection, God used the ministration of angels. The scene is awfully grand. 'There was a great earthquake, for'—see what one angel does—'there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it,'—the language of quiet power, and the calmness of triumph,—'sat upon it.' And what a form was there, in the dusk of the morning. 'His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.' No marvel that 'for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became'—their relative places were all changed, the dead was living, and the living who kept the dead became dead—they 'became as dead men.'

Do we ask why, at Lazarus's tomb, Jesus said to man, 'Take away the stone,' but here used for the very same thing the service of angels?

The reason, perhaps, lies in those words, 'It was very great.' Lazarus's stone, there was sufficient present force to remove; but this defied the power of a man's arm, therefore He, who always put forth strength just in proportion to the need, demanded an angel now to do the work.

And are we not right in thinking that those beautiful messengers, who minister to us always, have some especial charge about the scenes of death? Is not it they who stand round the dying bed, and waft the departing spirit to its rest? And were they not greatly conversant with the tomb of Jesus? He had never so much to do with angels, in any period of His life, as He had in His death. And there they were, in the little passage which conducts the saint from the waiting-room of this world to the presence-chamber of the King of Kings, all in their snowy whiteness.

Why do we make death black? Why do we put on our sable, when brilliant angels are robing the happy saint, for which we mourn, in its dazzling whiteness?

It is difficult to arrange the several visits which were made this morning to the tomb of Jesus. Certainly there were three; perhaps four. There was the visit of the women together, when they saw, as S. Mark relates, the young man sitting inside the tomb at the right side—we are all minute where we are interested—sitting at the right side, clothed in a white garment, and he sent them to the disciples and to Peter, and he said, 'Behold the place where they laid Him.' But whether that was the same visit recorded by S. Luke, when 'two men stood by them in shining garments, and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee,'—this is open to some difference of opinion. I incline to think that they are one and the same.

Then came the visit of Peter and John, stirred by those rousing words either of Mary Magdalene alone, or of Mary Magdalene in company with the others, that race of zeal and love, when John, being the younger, on the wings of love, ran fastest, but Peter, bolder in zeal, went in first, and saw the empty tomb; nevertheless, love carried off the palm at last, and then went in John, and he not only saw, but believed.

Consequent upon this, was the visit which Mary Magdalene, returning by herself to the sepulchre, paid it alone, that visit so wonderfully repaid and honoured, when to that sad heart, first the angels spoke so tenderly, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' and then, more tenderly and more fully, the Saviour Himself, selecting that poor woman for the high privilege of being the depository of the earliest confidences of His risen life, 'Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?'

But further into the exquisite delineation of these visits to the tomb, I must not now enter. Rather let me take one great principle, that a rising Saviour demands a rising life.

For remember, there are two laws. One law, by which all men gravitate, like a stone, to the earth; another law, equally strong, the law of grace, by which every renewed man is placed under the attractive influence of an ascending power, by which he must be always drawn higher and higher. For just as when a man, lying upon the ground, gets up and stands upright, his upright posture draws up with it all his limbs, so in the mystical body of Jesus Christ, the risen Head necessarily draws up all the mystical members. The process of elevation is one, which beginning at a man's conversion to God, goes on, day by day, hour by hour, in his tastes, in his judgments, in his affections, in his habits. First it is spiritual, then it is material. Now, in the rising spirit of the man, first he sees higher and higher elevations of being, and gradually fits for the fellowship of the saints and the presence of God. And presently, on that great Easter morning of the Resurrection, in his restored body, when it shall wake up, and rise satisfied with its Redeemer's likeness, made pure and ethereal enough to soar and blend and co-operate with the spirit, in all its holy and eternal exercises.

But what I wish to impress upon you now is, that this series in the ever-ascending scale begins now—that as there is, as every believer feels, a daily dying, so there is also, as our baptism tells us, a daily resurrection. The words which we should take for our Easter emblems are, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.'

It is always well to take advantage of particular seasons to do particular proper things. Now to-day, the proper thing is to rise, to get up higher. This Easter Day ought not to pass without every one of us beginning with some new affection, some new work. Have you settled with yourself what is that new work to which you will, this Easter, rise with a new affection? That is the way to honour a rising Saviour, for this is the word which should describe the Christian as well as the Christ, 'He is risen.'

Then see how it will be. In scenes where once you were often found

—scenes of folly, of gaiety, if not of sin—your place will now be empty. From your loftier occupation and holier pleasures, you will look back on those things, and as you see others moving in those circles where you once used to move, you will say, 'I am doing a great work, I cannot come down.' It will be something like a man looking from the skies on his own tomb.

If any near you see and marvel that you are not now what you used to be, the same man, the answer will be, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen.'

There have been times when this heart of yours was very dark, times when there were no loving prayers, no loving thoughts; you were shut up, you were your own grave. But now, with clearer views and simpler faith, you are happy; you have gone forth in 'the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free.' Angels, watching angels, as they rejoice over you, may say to those malignant powers of darkness that wish your destruction, and want you back again to those dark nights, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen.'

And when, over that form of yours, now so full of life and energy, some fond relative shall watch and wonder that it cannot answer, or when the solemn, slow procession shall have borne you to your last resting-place, and weeping eyes shall have looked their last, last look into the grave, it will be more than a human or an angel's voice which will whisper comfortingly, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Destroyed Grave.

O grave, I will be thy destruction. Hosea xiii. 14.

YOU will observe a distinction drawn between what Christ is to death and what He is to the grave. 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

It may be only that balance of Hebrew poetry which repeats an idea simply for the cadence. But it may be more. At this moment, death, even to a believer, is not destroyed. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed' is S. Paul's language long after the death of Christ, 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' There is the parting, and the pain, and the mystery of the passage, left. The sting is gone; but still it is death.

But the grave, as respects any harm it can do us, or anything we have to fear in it, is destroyed. Did we not know that we should come out of it again, or were that fact in the slightest degree doubtful, the grave would be an awful place. But now, it is only a question of time, an unfelt parenthesis in our immortality. We know that we shall not stay there. And in the meantime, till we leave it, there is no suffering, no trouble, no danger there. It is only rest; we are asleep. Therefore we may already say, 'The grave is destroyed'; and these thoughts may be in the words, 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

We have to do now only with the destroyed grave.

I. For graves—what are they? There are other graves worse than the graves which lie in the churchyard.

The grave of which Hosea and Isaiah speak is partly the grave of Israel's fallen state, and partly the consequence of that fallen state, their captivity at Babylon.

And it is to that grave, and perhaps also to the present grave-like state of the whole Jewish people, that the words, in their first immediate signification, refer, 'O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

But then, the eyes of the prophets were opened to see further, and they travelled on to spiritual and evangelical meanings, though probably what they saw of these things they themselves saw but dimly, yet they saw enough to write words in which we may see much more. And there cannot be a doubt, that Hosea himself went far beyond the return of the Jews from the seventy years' captivity, and had glimpses of that very thing which we are commemorating to-day, when he recorded the words of the Almighty, 'O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

I mention this only to show that there are other graves beside those to which we consign our dead. And the point is this, that of every grave, physical and moral, Christ is the destruction. I say discriminatingly, Christ; for not only does He declare broadly of Himself in every sense, 'I am the resurrection,'—I, the I am, the 'past,' the 'present,' and the 'to come,' essentially, in Myself, alone. 'I am the resurrection'; but S. Paul, quoting freely this very passage of Hosea, winds it up thus, 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And how it is in Christ, essentially, to do it, and how complete and perfect is the work, appears in the expression which I select, 'O grave,' not 'I will be thy destroyer,' but, which is much stronger, 'I will be thy destruction.'

It is something like that concentrated expression of the power of the name upon the other side—'captivity,'—'Thou hast led captivity captive.' And the two stand in beautiful antagonism—'captivity,' 'destruction.'

We have evidence that the fact is so, and that there can be no grave where Jesus is. The one grave with which He came in contact when He was upon the earth, ceased to be a grave as soon as He stood by it. His own grave was a grave annihilated, simply because He was in it. And when He comes again, the first token of His presence upon the earth will be, that all sepulchres, even to that mighty receptacle of the dead, the great ocean, will all give up their dead; because the two cannot co-exist· 'O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

II. There is another state. A soul which has once tasted life, life from God, has felt the quickening touch, has known what communion with God is, has enjoyed His smile, has heard His voice, has walked sweetly with Him in the cool of the evening hour, has found His service liberty.

Now, it is all gone. The spiritual life is fled, it is in the dust, it cannot lift itself up again. Every thought creeps; every prayer trails; every affection grovels. Death, the vilest death is there. Day comes after day, but inside that heart it is all night. No morning wakes to break the more than midnight gloom of that thick darkness which can be felt. 'Has God forgotten to be gracious? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?' And then the poor conscience says, 'Yes, I am a dead man out of mind.'

Oh! who will roll away that stone? Is not it a grave? Is not that the very grave which David speaks of when he says, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death'? What shall we do? Believe in the Resurrection. It is a grave; but because it is a grave it is not for ever; for graves are not for ever. It has an opening. There is a voice above that grave which says to you, 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.' Only wait for it. Lent is over, Easter is come—Easter with its beautiful risings and its songs. The heart that has Christ in it cannot be a sepulchre long. He will make the way through as surely as He did in the sepulchre at the garden. Only let the Sun of Righteousness rise, and He will carry you away upon His healing wing, up and up. No grave can destroy that which has in it the grave's destruction.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Assurance of Judgment.

Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. Acts xvii. 31.

THE Resurrection of Christ is the turning-point of the world's history. From the day when He rose from the tomb a new impulse was given to the world. The spirit of the Risen One seemed to enter into humanity; men's thoughts have been changed, their habits refined, their morals elevated; the Church has been created, the world has been revolutionised. But it is not of the impulse thus given to the history of the world that the Apostle speaks; his eye reaches across the stream of time, and he beholds the final issue of all things; he sees the Judge seated on His judgment-seat; before whom the books are opened; he affirms his persuasion that a day is coming in the which all men shall give an account of their deeds to Him whose eye is mighty to pierce beneath the plausible aspects of life, and to detect the hidden wrongs which respectability, rank, and reputation have long availed to hide. And when he is asked for the ground of this expectation, he points to the Resurrection of Christ. 'I believe,' he seems to say, 'that a day of judgment is at hand; and do you ask me why? I point to the empty sepulchre, I point to the risen Lord, and I say that here is my witness that God has appointed a day in the which He will judge thee.'

On two thoughts—righteousness in God, and responsibility in man—the judgment to come may be said to hinge. And it is to these two thoughts that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the most striking emphasis, and in this way contributes an assurance of a judgment to come.

I. First, it gives emphasis to the righteousness of God. There are many arguments and illustrations by which we try to assure ourselves of a life to come. But the one thought which seems more than any other to have laid hold upon the minds of men is the spectacle of the inequalities and injustices of the world as it now is. It is felt that we cannot be looking upon a complete scene. Justice so often miscarries; wrong is so often triumphant; merit is not always rewarded; evil seems to have a premium of success, and Fortune to distribute her honours and emoluments with careless hand and blinded eyes.

If Christ remain in the tomb, though the yearning for justice may still be strong, it lacks the assurance that it will even be satisfied; for along the tide of time we should look and see that the wise and good perish, as well as the ignorant and foolish; that the innocent and the poor and the righteous have one and all vanished from this world, driven down too often into the land of darkness by the craft and crime of man, and God has never set the seal of His approval upon their holiness, vindicated their character, or given the sanction of His pleasure to their life, till, looking in vain for some token that God approved the right, our hearts might have faltered, and our faith, like the Psalmist's, might have failed, or at least drooped into a painful hunger. But now is Christ risen from the dead! And in His Resurrection God has smiled upon the life of holiness, the death of heroic love, and has set His seal upon the right, and pronounced condemnation on the wrong. He has told us in the Resurrection of Christ that our faith in the ultimate victory of holiness is not wrong; that our belief that the innocent and pure would yet be vindicated is no hallucination; that our confidence in the righteous character of our Creator is not misplaced; that the coming age will supply the defects, remedy the faults, rectify the judgments, and avenge the wrongs of the present, that He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness.

II. Second, the Resurrection of Christ gives emphasis to the responsibility of man. The second element essential to this idea of a judgment hereafter is to be found in the responsibility of man; without this, the judgment would be but a fiction and a mere mockery of justice. And to this responsibility the Resurrection of Christ gives emphasis.

The Resurrection of Christ is the proclamation of the possibility of the spiritual Resurrection which has been the dream of the ages; it is the pledge of the power which will be vouchsafed to us to walk in newness of life, the earnest of that Holy Spirit whose presence in our souls is the power of the life of holiness and love. Freely as God's rain and sun, widely as human need and sorrow, is the gift of that life vouchsafed to man. As far as the deadening influences of hereditary moral taint have spread, may the quickening influences of the risen Christ be realised. The second Adam is made a quickening Spirit. Let men be oppressed by the thought of the heart-crushing and life-crushing determinism; there is a compensating power in the Gospel. As sin reigned unto death—the death of hope, the death of power, the death of love—so grace reigns though righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

The Testimony to the Resurrection.

Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? S. JOHN xx. 15.

CONSIDER, first, the conscious testimony of the Apostles on the subject of the Resurrection; secondly, what we may call their unconscious testimony on this subject; and, thirdly, the testimony of S. Paul which, for a good reason, stands by itself upon this subject.

I. Now, with regard to the conscious testimony of the Apostles it is only necessary to say that these men did begin immediately after this time of trouble, in the midst of Jerusalem itself, within a few weeks of the time of the Crucifixion, among the very people who had seen Jesus borne along to His death, and where contradiction would have been the easiest, to preach Christ as 'one whom God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses,' and that this, the burden of the first sermon on the day of Pentecost, was the subject of every later sermon. They had no fear that in Jerusalem such a notion would be laughed to scorn; nor did they think of keeping it back in Ephesus, or in Corinth, or wherever they went, as a thing less interesting to those distant places which had never known Him. They preached, throughout, 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Belief in a risen Saviour was evidently that which they expected from all their hearers alike. On this point I should only waste your time if I multiplied quotations. There is no one who reads the New Testament, ay, even carelessly, that can have any doubt upon it at all.

II. Now turn to the unconscious testimony of the same men. They saw their Master taken away. They were appalled at the cruelty with which men assailed His life. They knew not what to think when He allowed the wicked to prevail against Him even unto death. They were scattered when He was first taken, but they watched Him still, and watched Him with feelings of hope. Peter and John were not far off, but the others also watched, hoping that before the consummation of the deed the powers of heaven would interpose. Instead of this, there came death. Upon the Cross hangs He that had led them and cheered them with hopes,—a dead man. The lips that taught them are livid and motionless. The eye, whose gleam of kindness they had relied on to sustain them, is void of speculation. The priests turn homeward, content with their complete victory, and the disciples have nothing left to console them in the completeness of their defeat, except, indeed, the recollection of a death full of patience and of trust in God. But as to their hopes, these are gone. It is useless now to speculate on the nature of His kingdom; there shall be no kingdom more. Amazed and confounded, they fail to collect their thoughts so as to form a new opinion of Him who has so disappointed them. 'We trusted it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.' That is the temper in which the disciples, perhaps without exception, enter into the eventful period between the Crucifixion and the Ascension, known to us as the great 'forty days'; and at the end of that time they emerged, brave, confident, ready to face death for their convictions, and ready to make the death of Christ, which so destroyed their hopes, the centre of their teaching unto the very end.

Now, you will confess that this was a great change, at least. They had lost the hope of their life: they found it again. They had given up all attempts to understand the ways of God in such a grievous blow: now they understand the plan completely. What had passed in the intervening time? Minds are not thus recomposed and recreated without some means to operate upon them. The Lord Himself had come back and changed their mourning into joy. On the very day of His Resurrection strange reports arose. The women that had loved Him see Him again. Two disciples, not of the twelve, going wearily and heavy of heart, had been joined by a stranger who revealed Himself to them at last as the Lord Himself. After an interval He appeared to the eleven. One of them doubted yet, but Jesus gave Him special proofs. He appeared, S. Paul says, to five hundred brethren at once. Enough is told us in the Gospels to show that the forty days were spent in teaching them to accept this momentous miracle. And it needed all His pains. They saw Him, at first, with astonishment and fear. Their very powers of knowing Him were disturbed. Neither Mary nor those that went to Emmaus recognised Him as they did of old. When that short period was over, all the disciples, not the Apostles only, admitted the fact of the Resurrection—not only admitted it, but had grown accustomed to its proofs. They had seen Him themselves· they knew where to point to others who had seen Him. Ten or more appearances are on record, but there were probably more than this. Recognise well, I beseech you, the completeness of this change. The death of Jesus almost overturns their reason. A month passes, and they appear again, not only believing the Resurrection, but having ceased to be surprised at it, building all their hopes thereupon.

III. And now I beg you to consider, as the last stage of this hasty review, the testimony of S. Paul. It stands apart, for many reasons. His is the only case where an eyewitness tells us that he had seen Christ. 'Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.'

If the disciples of the Lord may be supposed to be prejudiced, and to determine because of their prejudice to find for their Master some high and singular destiny, that does not apply to S. Paul. He was wholly without and beyond the circle of Christ's influence as a teacher. He was protected from that influence by a most fierce prejudice against the Christians, rooted deep in his heart along with his pharisaic zeal. The Lord appears to him, and he becomes an Apostle instead of a persecutor. You cannot say, in this case, that 'the wish was father to the thought,' that a strong desire that Jesus should rise was transformed into a fancy that he had seen Him.

Upon that very journey where he saw Him, Paul had set out resolved to persecute, to the death, all that called on Christ. He had not heard the promises that for six months had been made to the other disciples. He believed that Christ Himself was now beyond the reach of persecution—dead, despised. And, lo, Christ met him by the way, spoke to him, changed his whole life. It is quite out of the question to say that this is the result of a wish and an imagination. All his wishes lay the other way. Had he been the sport of dreams, some vision of Moses or of Elijah would have formed itself in that teeming brain, and the voice that spoke to him would have said, 'Well done, faithful servant, smite home and consume them who are changing the law of your fathers.' I say that all attempts to analyse, in some natural way, the fact of S. Paul's conversion seem to me to be signal failures. The consequences to the Church were incalculable. To S. Paul, under God, we owe the foundation of all the churches in the West, that is, of all the churches wherein the faith is most active at present. All these have their root in S. Paul's conversion; and to assign to a delusive vision of an overwrought mind an act so laden with mighty consequences is contrary to all historic analogy. No life of mere man has ever been greater than his—so ardent in zeal, so calm in judgment, so heavenly in its aims, so practical in its methods, so untiring in its devotion, and yet so self-possessed, so full of dignity and yet so humble. Could we have known him in the flesh, how should we have respected his opinion! How his ardour would have stirred us up! To none of us would it have occurred that he had set out in his noble mission under a delusion and as the sport of a dream. Why, a life, like a tree, must be judged by its fruits. Out of a dream come only dreams. Out of a deep conviction and belief will come words and acts that accord with that conviction. Never was there a life lived on this earth of which it would be more natural to say, 'This man has known and seen Christ'; and, when he tells us that so it was, no one was ever more entitled to belief.

And what does S. Paul say? First, with regard to the whole subject of miracles his witness is very remarkable. He writes to the Corinthians—and remember that no sceptical doubt has ever overthrown the genuineness of that book that he writes: it is a true document of the time. He writes to the Corinthians on the subject of the variety of spiritual gifts. He mentions as a matter well known to them that the gifts of doing miracles and of speaking with tongues and of healing are there in the Corinthian Church. He does not say that it is wonderful, or that it is not wonderful: he does not argue that it should be so, or that it should not: he does not infer from it that Christianity is true. He mentions it, as an illustration of another subject, to those who know the facts as well as he does, just as one of you might say that one clergyman of your church preached the sermon better, and another read the service most distinctly. S. Paul came into the Church as one born out of due time. He had no predisposition to Christian miracles, but he found them in the Church, and he mentioned their existence. Admit only that that one epistle of the New Testament is genuine—and even the sceptical, as I said, admit that it is—and you also admit that miracles and gifts of healing were familiar as household words in the Corinthian Church.

And about this special miracle what does he say? 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.' That is what he tells the Corinthians. And then to the Romans, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Notice that it is a perfect and complete creed. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Strange testimony, if you consider it, to the resurrection of a man.

'If ye then be risen with Christ.' 'Risen with Christ.' How are we risen? What change has passed upon us to which we could give so great and holy a name? It is your fault if it be not so. Oh, this holy day which is now drawing to a close! Do not study its lesson externally, as if it belonged not to you. 'Risen with Christ' means this: it means that we have at least begun to conquer the lower nature within us, that we are fighting with lusts which belong only to this world and to hell, that we are striving to see God more, and to lose ourselves more in adoration of Him who, when He came back from the grave to those suffering and almost desperate disciples, spoke to them the word of peace. 'Peace be unto you!' Work this miracle in yourselves. Awake, arise from the dead body of your past self and the swathing clothes that now embarrass you. What is it? Is it a darling sin? Is it some wretched slavery of custom which forbids you to be serious? Awake out of that, and, leaving the graveclothes wrapped by themselves in a corner of your tomb, come out into the light and adore your Christ, and say, 'Let us, too, Lord, be risen with Thee.' All the argument that I have been using, what is it to souls that have not passed through that experience? Is there nothing, then, but these physical facts in the world? But I myself have felt in my soul certain moral facts which partake of the same nature. If I can turn to Christ, if I can put my old self away, no physical science gives me an account of that; but the

Bible, which is the philosophy of grace, tells me how it came to pass; and so I have felt in my own person the wonder-working power of Christ, and nothing is miraculous to me any more.

ARCHBISHOP THOMSON.

Remember Jesus Christ.

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel. 2 Tim. ii. 8.

I. A HEAVY burden had been laid upon the young disciple to whom S. Paul so wrote. Before he had reached middle life Timotheus had been placed as the Apostle's delegate, with episcopal authority, over the Christian community at Ephesus; and it seems clear that he was still responsible for that great trust when this letter was sent to him. It is hard to realise the strain which at that time such an office must have put upon a man's robustness of conviction and tenacity of purpose. It needed, indeed, a clear head and a steady hand to guide the Church of Christ at Ephesus; it needed above all else a heart that no secret unreality, or bitterness, or self-seeking had been stealthily enfeebling against the day of trial. To believe with an unwavering confidence that the future was Christ's, in spite of all that pride and splendour of paganism, which nowhere bore itself more arrogantly than in Ephesus; when all Asia and the world was thronging to the worship of Diana, to be always sure that her magnificence was worse than worthlessness, a hideous and degrading lie, that must break up and be gone like a bad dream at the first touch of light; to be quite untroubled by all the brilliancy and vigour of the social life in which the claim of Christ was blankly ignored or cleverly made fun of; to look up at the great temple, gleaming in the sunlight, famous as the one mansion worthy of the gods, and then to hold to it constantly that that little cluster of humble folk, meeting day by day for their Holy Eucharist, had found a truth and owned a Lord before whose glory all that pomp and strength of idol-worship should be utterly abolished—this could not but make for most men a severe demand on faith. But for Timotheus there were keener tests of reality and courage than all these. The language and emphasis of the two letters addressed to him strongly suggest the impression that he was not of a very tough, robust, or stubborn temperament. He was not the man who, when things seem to be going against him or getting into confusion, can shrug his shoulders and refuse to be harassed. Rather he seems one to whom antagonism, insolence, isolation, would mean sharp suffering; one whose heart might grow sick as he looked at a gathering storm of hostility and danger; one on whose courage and constancy such a storm would break with a severe, if not a staggering, shock. And certainly there were black and angry clouds coming up over the sky; things promised a rough time for the Church at Ephesus. The recent persecution under Nero, though its brutalities may have been confined to Rome, had shown what Christians might be called to face whenever policy or passion chanced to prompt a massacre; there were not wanting those who might find it convenient to stir up something of the sort at Ephesus; and the sense that it was always possible could not but tell on the position and outlook of the Church. But graver still was the mischief that was gaining ground within the Church itself; where the restlessness and superstition of some who had seemed to be sincere was corrupting the faith of Christ and foisting strange, morbid fancies into the centre of the Christian teaching; so that men were drifting off from all reality of religion, through idle talk and sickly exercises of perverted cleverness, towards that moral degradation which, in a place like Ephesus, closed in so readily as soon as faith had ceased to hold a man above it. Let us try to measure all these conditions by anything like the same scale on which we estimate the difficulties of our own day; let us remember how small and weak and unpromising a movement Christianity must have seemed to a dispassionate Ephesian critic; let us add the thought that Timotheus was on the very point of losing the one man through whose vivid, penetrating, and inspiring personality he had drawn the strongest impulse, the constant guidance and encouragement of his life (since the time of S. Paul's departure was at hand), and we may probably feel that things were looking very dark and threatening and terrible to the sensitive and delicate man who had been placed in charge of the Ephesian Church.

II. If we were writing to a friend amidst difficulties so great, and especially if we were writing with the expectation that we might never write to him again, we should certainly be most careful what we said. We should do our best to enter thoroughly into his position; we should feel that there was a grave responsibility in being allowed to write to him at such a time, and that we must write nothing which was not absolutely real, and likely to come home to him. And then, I think, this would be a part of our desire as we wrote, that we might fasten upon his memory with a deep and clear impression some thought which seemed to us most likely to emerge into the front of consciousness at the time of peril and despondency, and to rally the wavering forces of the will. We know how one recollection, distinct and dominant in the mind, has often been the decisive force at a critical moment; how upon the battlefield, for instance, or under the almost overpowering pressure of temptation, the thought of a man's country, of his home, of his ancestral traditions, has reinforced, as with a fresh tide of strength, his faltering heart, and horne him on to victory, whether by success or death. We may recall the scene in one of our African campaigns, the scene preserved for us by a clever artist, where the thought of a man's old school, and the boyish eagerness anyhow to bring it to the front, was the impulse of a splendid courage. Yes, there are images in most men's minds which, if they rise at the right moment, will do much to make them heroes; a word, a glance, some well-known sight, some old familiar strain of music, may beckon the image out of the recesses of the memory, and if the man has in him the capacity of generous action he will use it then.

III. It is on this characteristic of human nature that S. Paul relies as he writes to Timotheus the words of the text. He would avail himself of this; he would raise it to its highest conceivable employment; he would enlist it as a constant, ready, powerful ally on the side of duty—on the side of God. He may never see Timotheus, never write to him again; well, then, he will leave dinted into his mind, by a few incisive words, one commanding and sustaining image. For it is not, as it appears in our English version, an event of the past, however supreme in its importance, however abiding in its results, that S. Paul here fastens upon the memory of his disciple; it is not the abstract statement of a truth in history or theology, however central to the faith, however vast in its consequences; it is a living person, whom S. Paul has seen, whose form he would have Timotheus keep ever in his mind, distinct, beloved, unrivalled, sovereign: 'Bear in remembrance Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.' When the hardship which Christ's true soldier must expect is pressing heavily upon you; when the task of self-discipline seems tedious and discouraging; when the day's work seems more than you can bear, and when night, it may be, brings but little rest; when you are sick at heart to see folly and wilfulness, conceit and treachery, ruining what years of labour and devotion hardly reared, then let that ever living form stand out before you: 'Bear in remembrance Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.' Bear Him in remembrance as He now is, enthroned in everlasting victory. He toiled to utter weariness; He pleased not Himself; He was despised and rejected; He was betrayed by one whom He had chosen, denied by another, deserted by all: He suffered more than thought can ever compass; and if ever failure could be written at the end of any enterprise, it might have seemed reasonable to write it of His work as they took His Body from the Cross. Well then, if your tasks and disappointments seem too much for you, bear Him in remembrance as He now is. Never can the disproportion between advantages and difficulties, between resources and demands, have seemed to human eyes wider than when the Galilean peasant came to found a world-wide kingdom; never did an unreasonable venture seem to end in a more natural disaster than when the religious leaders of His own people combined with the representatives of the Roman government to crush Him with a strong hand. Well then, if the strength, the wickedness, the wealth, the confidence of Paganism at Ephesus, at times appal and stagger you; if there seems something irresistibly discouraging in the brilliance, the culture, the self-sufficiency of the society which ignores or ridicules you, bear in remembrance Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, exalted now to the majesty on high. Yes, bear Him in remembrance, not only as the supreme and all-illuminating instance of the victory that overcometh the world, not only as one who has erased the word impossible out of the vocabulary that can be used in speaking of God's work, but also as the everlasting strength of His servants, the ever-watchful guardian of His Church, as one who knows your need and is indeed sufficient for your help, who never can forget or fail you, beneath whose gaze you serve, and by whose love you shall be crowned.

IV. Let us take two thoughts this Easter morning from the counsel which S. Paul thus gives. First, that he is trying to lodge at the heart of Timotheus's life and work that which has been the deepest and most effective force in his own. S. Paul was convinced that he had seen the risen Lord; and the energy, the effect, of that unfading image throughout his subsequent life might go some way to prove that the conviction was true. Physical weight is sometimes measured by the power of displacement; and in the moral and spiritual sphere we tend, at least, to think that there must be something solid and real to account for a change so unexpected, so unworldly, so thorough, so sustained through every trial, so vast in its practical outcome, as was the conversion of S. Paul. No doubt rests on the fact of the conversion, nor on the greatness of its results; in regard to both we can appeal to Epistles which the most trenchant criticism leaves unquestioned. And if S. Paul declares that the whole impulse of his new life came from the sight of one who had been crucified and had risen from the dead, we may surely claim that his witness is a real contribution to the evidence of Christ's Resurrection. It may be set aside—it must be if our knowledge of all things actual and possible enables us to say that there can be no resurrection of the dead; but that would be a bold presumption. Or it may be justly said that no one man's conviction, however commended by its steadiness under trial and its practical effect, can bear the weight of so stupendous an inference. But, then, S. Paul's certainty that he had seen Christ after His Crucifixion does not stand alone to bear that weight; it is but one part in a large and various mass of evidence. Similarly it may be said with truth that the convictions of enthusiastic men have produced immense results even when they were utterly mistaken. But let S. Paul's conviction be taken in its context; let justice be done to the character it wrought in him; to the coherence and splendour of the work it animated; to the penetrating, sober insight of his practical teaching; to the consistency, not of expression, but of inmost thought and life, which it disclosed to any careful study of his writings; lastly, to the grasp which his words have laid upon the strongest minds in Christendom through all succeeding centuries, the prophetic and undying power which, amidst vast changes of methods and ideas, men widely different have felt and reverenced in these epistles—let these distinctive notes of S. Paul's work be realised, together with its incalculable outcome in the course of history, and it will seem hard to think that the central, ruling impulse of it all was the obstinate blunder of a disordered mind. This, at least, I think, may be affirmed, that, if there were against belief in Christ's Resurrection any such difficulty as the indisputable facts of S. Paul's life and work present to disbelief, we should find it treated as of crucial importance, and that, I think, not unjustly.

'Bear in remembrance Jesus Christ raised from the dead.' It is the form which has made him what he is, for life or for death, that S. Paul would with his last words, it may be, leave clenched for ever on the mind and heart of his disciple. The vision of that form may keep him true and steadfast when all is dark, confused, and terrible around him. May not we do well to take the bidding to ourselves? We know, perhaps, that our hearts are weak, and our wills unsteady; the time in which we should have stored up strength against the day of trial may not have been used as now we wish it had been. For it seems as though life was likely to grow harder as the years go on, as though it might be very difficult 'to have a right judgment in all things,' and to keep loyally in the path of charity and truth. There are signs of trouble and confusion in the air, and some faint hearts begin to fail; and some of us, perhaps, 'see not our tokens—so clearly as we did.' But one we may see, as we lift our eyes this Easter Day; it is He who liveth and was dead; and behold, He is alive for evermore; He who cannot fail His Church, or leave even the poorest and least worthy of His servants desolate and bewildered when the darkness gathers, and the cry of need goes up; He who may be to any one of us what He was to His Apostle; He, our strength against all despondency and irresoluteness and cowardice and sloth; He who knows us perfectly, yet 'loves us'—how strange it is—yet better than He knows; He who, if we have borne with patient courage our few years of trial in the twilight here, will receive us into that everlasting light which He both died and rose again to win for us.

DEAN PAGET.

EASTER DAY

Easter Day Morning.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
PSALM cxviii. 24.

I. WE have two reasons to rejoice to-day—we rejoice both for Christ's sake and for our own. We rejoice, because He whom we love, He who loved us, and died for love of us, is not now dead, but alive for evermore, Amen; and again we rejoice, because we are ourselves alive from the dead, able to live a holy life, a life in God's presence, like the life which He lives now. Yet these two reasons for joy are one, because the truth is, that He and we are one. We cannot divide the joys of love, and say how far we rejoice because He whom we love is alive and blessed, how far because we ourselves taste the joy of His living presence; love does not admit of such minute analysis; it consists in finding our own blessedness in His, in feeling His blessedness to be our own. Still, we can distinguish in thought and word what cannot be separated; we may say that we rejoice for Jesus' sake that He is alive, and for our own sake that we share His life.

Or rather, we may put it the other way. We rejoice for our own sake that Jesus is alive; we rejoice that He who loves us, He whom we love is still there for us to love, still actively loving us. They who mourn for the dead without a Christian's hope, do not cease to love those whom, as they think, they have lost for ever; but they grieve that they cannot feel their love, that those who are gone are no longer able to love them. And not only they, but ourselves also, who know that the dead are still alive, that the holy dead do not cease to love, but are made more perfect in love than when they were with us—even we also mourn that love cannot reach them, that we can do nothing for love of them; that we cannot show our love to them by acts of kindness, and perhaps also that their love to us cannot show itself either, so that unless our faith be very strong and our love very spiritual and unselfish, we feel less consciousness of their love than we would or than we ought.

But Jesus not only is alive in the sense that our departed friends are, but in every sense: He not only is a living Soul, but is alive both in Soul and Body, alive and working with all the powers of true God and true Man. We can, in the Spirit, have direct intercourse with Him; we can speak to Him and He to us; He knows all our love to Him, and He tells us all that we can comprehend of His love to us. We have that blessing of love which consists in unity with the beloved—in unity felt and realised, in the consciousness that we love and are loved, and that nothing comes between us, that nothing can separate us from that love.

II. And again, we rejoice for Jesus' sake that we ourselves are alive. If we were still dead in sin, we could do nothing for Him ; even if we knew how He loves us, we could make no return to Him for His love, no reparation to Him for our sins against Him, our wrongs done to His loving heart. But now we can; if we are indeed united to Christ by faith, if we have died to sin on His Cross, and risen with Him to a new life, now we can do Him real service ; now, by our works of charity to His brethren, we can do acts of kindness to Himself, can do what He will actually be grateful for, will reckon as returns made to His own unutterable acts of kindness to us. All good works done for the sake of Jesus, by those who love Jesus, are by Jesus accepted as benefits to Himself; we have that blessedness of knowing that we are not now quite unworthy of His love, though we never forget that He loved us when we were. Remembering our state by nature, our own sinfulness when Jesus first loved us, we are enabled to measure the greatness of His love, who loved us when we were so unworthy; but now we are not ashamed to accept His love, because, unworthy as we were, we are so no longer—He has made us worthy. It is the nature of perfect love to transfigure the beloved into its own likeness; the Lord Jesus, having taught us to love Him, having poured His own Spirit of love into our hearts, enables us to love Him with love like His own; it comes forth from His own. Loved by Him, and sanctified by His Spirit of love, we will not shrink away from His presence and say we are unworthy of it; but will come near to Him, and seek to be made one with Him, knowing that if we are united to His spotless holiness the sins of our own nature are of a surety all purged away.

W. H. SIMCOX.

The Joy of the Resurrection.

Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. S. JOHN xx. 20.

HOW could they be other than glad? They loved the Lord, and therefore they must be glad to have Him with them. It is the very nature of love to rejoice in the Beloved's presence; he does not love to whom that presence is not a joy, and the absence of it a sorrow. So the Lord said to His Disciples three days ago, when He was going away from them, 'Ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you.' For these two days the Apostles had been left in sorrow—sorrow all the greater in proportion as their love to the Lord was greater, for He whom they loved was lost to them—lost, so far as they could tell, hopelessly. 'For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead;' as yet they understood not, perhaps remembered not, His own words, wherein He had plainly foretold His death as it had come to pass, and had as plainly foretold the Resurrection that was to follow that death. These things the disciples did not yet know nor believe; and for want of this fresh, this exalted faith, the faith that they had had before in their Lord had died. They had believed in Him with a faith implanted, not by flesh and blood, but by His Father who is in heaven, but now that faith was cut down. They had known that He was not merely a righteous Man, not merely a prophet or one of the prophets, but He of whom Moses and the prophets did write, the Christ, the Son of the living God. And the Christ they looked for was one who was to abide for ever, one who was to set up the Kingdom of God gloriously and mightily upon earth; He was to redeem Israel first of all, and then to bring the whole world, like Israel, into obedience to God. Such had been their faith, such their hope, of what Jesus was to do; now, how were their hopes cut off, since Thursday and Friday last! He who was to have appeared—who on Sunday almost had appeared—as a king, and as God's king too—riding on prosperously in His majesty, conquering and to conquer—had now failed hopelessly, had died a slave's death. Faith and hope perished with Him; they could only speak of their belief and their hopes as of things that were past. 'We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel'—but He is dead, has died without having redeemed them. Jesus was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people—that, there could be no doubt of; the loss of their faith did not tempt them to deny that, or to doubt that what they had seen in Jesus was indeed the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. But He had been rejected by the people like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others of the old prophets. He had been not only rejected but slain. He was like the old prophets, He was one of them, perhaps the greatest; but He could be nothing more—not the Redeemer of Israel, not He who was to be brought near to the Ancient of Days, and to receive a kingdom which shall not pass away.

I. So it seemed to be when the Lord died; so it must have been ir the Lord had been indeed under the power of death. But while the faith of the disciples thus vanished at the death of the Lord, their love did not. They loved Him still; whatever He was, His hold upon their hearts was too strong to be broken. Whatever the agony of doubt they might feel, when the promises of God seemed to be broken, still the goodness of God that had shone forth in Jesus had not lost its hold upon their hearts; they still clung together, one with another, their common love to Jesus making them all one. Their love was only a sorrow now, but a sorrow better than any other joy; they felt it better to love Jesus and to have lost Him, than to love any other and to enjoy his presence.

And then behold, the Jesus whom they had lost was with them! Their love was turned from a sorrow into a well-spring of delight; and their faith, which had been dead, started into life again at the touch of this blessed love. Now Jesus was with them again—Jesus who had been with them, and had seemed lost to them for ever. They had loved Him before, had rejoiced to have Him with them, but their love was all the greater and their joy all the greater now. For now they had learned to feel how necessary His love was to their life; they had been without Him for three days, and knew what crushing sorrow that was; now, when they had Him again, they knew better how to value His love than they ever had before. And to value love more is the same thing as to love more, so that since the Lord died the Apostles loved Him more than ever, and mourned for His death more than they had before rejoiced in His presence. But now His restored presence made them love Him most of all; now their new joy was greater than their old joy, greater than even their recent sorrow.

II. So it was, naturally and necessarily, to the Apostles; so it is to all who love the Lord as they loved Him. They were glad when they saw the Lord; but not because they saw Him only, but because they knew He was with them. Their sight was an assurance of His presence, and so brought them joy; but it was not the only possible assurance, not even the best; as He said, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' We, who have not seen the Lord, have at least as good cause as the disciples to share the joy they had when they saw Him; for He is with us as truly, as effectually, as He was with them, or even more so. For the presence of Christ that is discerned by faith only is closer than the presence that brought the sight of His bodily form, and brings greater blessings. So He said to His disciples before He left them, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' 'If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father'; and when He was come again from the dead, He said to Mary Magdalene, 'Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.' Now He is gone away, now He is ascended to His Father; but He has not left us desolate, He has come to us in a better way than when He could be seen. Jesus dwells with us now, not as a Man with men, but by His Spirit, and His Spirit does more than dwell among us—with us yet outside us—it makes its abode within us. Jesus is not before the believer's eyes, but in his heart. It is much for the lover of Jesus to have His beloved before his eyes—to know that He was near him, close to him, ready to help and comfort him in any need, and always manifesting to him His love and His loveliness; but it is more for the lover of Jesus now to have Jesus in his soul, to be joined to the Lord and made one spirit; for that is the perfect end, the highest prize and consummation of love, and the most perfect blessedness to the lover. And this is what Jesus gives now to those who believe in the merits of His death, and in the power of His life; this He has offered to us to-day, in sacramental union with Him; this He offers to us always, if we keep always inviolate the faith and love whereby this union is to be attained.

And yet, though the joy and blessedness of love that recognises Christ's presence by faith is greater than the joy and blessedness of love in those that saw the Lord, it is not the highest joy or blessedness of all. It is joyful to know that Jesus is with us by bodily sight; it is greater joy to know by faith that He is with us more closely, more effectually. But what will it be to see Him, not with the bodily eye only, but in immediate spiritual communion—to see Him spirit to spirit, as the Apostles saw Him face to face? If we hold fast our faith now, if we love now heartily and steadily, then the joy our faith gives us, great as it is, will be the least part of our blessedness. This joy in Christ's presence is variable and uncertain; it depends on ourselves; our faith is weak, and it may be lost; though Jesus has graciously come to us, we may forfeit His presence, we may still more easily lose our right to be sure of it, and our power to rejoice in it. But let us only maintain our faith for a little while, as by His grace we can maintain it; and then the trials of faith, and the need of faith, will come to an end. Then we shall pass into a presence of Christ that cannot be doubted, that cannot be forfeited; we shall ever be with the Lord, knowing as we are known, and finding in His presence the fulness of joy. W. H. SIMCOX.

Christ the First Fruits.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.
I COR. XV. 20.

WHAT a shout of joy there is in that word 'Now,' with which the Apostle opens out into his glorious theme of the Resurrection! There it had been struggling to get out through the discords and obscure passages of controversial doubt—this great theme of the Apostolic Gospel now caught up and dragged down by the cries of those who say there is no resurrection of the dead, down deeper into the sombre depths of a false witness to God, of a tragic mistake in estimating evidence, down into the gloom where the holy dead be only as so many perishing lives crushed by sin, and a challenge to despair. We hardly trace a note of the first inspiration in the dismal discord of broken hopes and false expectations: 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' But it is there, at this point, that the Resurrection theme bursts out, rising above and upon the shifting discords, and opening out of the passages which ended only in sorrow, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.' Christian preaching was not the proclamation of a meaningless and empty message. It was not a principle incapable of producing any good results. God's messengers were not false witnesses; the Christian dead were not perished; Christian life was not a hollow sham, a cunningly devised fable. All was true; all was bright; the brighter because the very discordances of the doubt could only open out into this, 'Christ is risen, His people shall also rise.' And yet the Apostle is true to history in this triumphant contrast of glory following on gloom. He himself in his experience had inverted the order. Christ had appeared to him in glory, in a blinding flash, an overwhelming utterance, to send him to trace back a great anti-climax of life, through suffering, through tumult, through a despised Gospel, through prison and a criminal's death—a sequence which he himself seemed to recognise when he said, 'That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings'—the glory of the Resurrection first, the fellowship of the sufferings afterwards. But to the first Christians, and to the Apostles, it had been otherwise. They had been associated with a Man who had gone through one ill of life after another and emptied them of their misery. Christ had gone up to poverty and called it a blessed state, and they had accepted it. If they had dreamed of ambitious schemes, of power, or of a throne in a Messianic kingdom, Christ had emptied once for all such hopes of any attractiveness, and promised a possession to meekness, and a kingdom to humility; and they had accepted it. He had ministered to disease over and over again, and awakened it to health; He had restored the ravages of sin, and unloosed the knots of doubt. But they had lived to see Him encounter death in His own person, not in the person of a son, or daughter, or friend. They had seen the dark water rise higher and higher· in pain, in loss of friends, in separation, in loneliness, and loss of power. One by one the correspondences of life were snapped off under a darkened sky, and on a quaking earth. The earthly ties are broken and the sufferer is dead; the Christ is powerless; the hope of Israel is gone; all just the same as with ordinary mortals—the grave, the seal, the stone; there they are, just as the Apostle describes: the shrieking discord, the jangling notes, the confused passages, inextricable error. Christ is dead: our preaching is vain, our faith is vain; false witness is of God; the blessed dead have perished; we have hoped in Christ, and this world has snapped off that hope—we are of all men most miserable.

But *now*, with a burst of glory riding on the storm, the depths of gloom are dispelled. Christ is risen! The last enemy, which seemed so victorious, is destroyed. Christ has been raised, and not merely as He was before, but the firstfruits of them that are asleep. Christ has risen the same, and yet not the same as He was before. He died with a Body adapted to the world of sense; He rose with a Body adapted to the world of spirits—the firstfruits of them that were asleep; no longer with a Body in which He hungered and thirsted and suffered, but a Body filled with a different correspondence altogether.

I. It is something of this joy that we feel at Easter. It is not merely a selfish festival in which we see a way out of a great trouble—the engulfing jaws of death. It is not merely a festival which lights up, with a blessed glow, the pathos of sharp separation and the buried hopes which lie beneath the churchyard sod. There is to the Christian more than this. There is a ring of triumph in the 'Now' of Easter after the strange discords of the Passion and the sombre gloom of Good Friday. The Church accurately reflects the adoring thankfulness of the Christian soul which hastens to put a diadem on Easter in place of the sharp crown of Good Friday, and to welcome with a genuine glow of love the triumph of our Redeemer and the reversal of the verdict of Calvary.

The risen Christ. Still, for all this, we are allowed to welcome in Easter a revelation where a revelation alone could help us. The veil between us and death is as heavy and as impenetrable as was the stone which kept the holy women from their pious purpose; but Easter lifts up for us as much as we may know, as much as it is good for us to learn of the mystery of life beyond the grave. And we see Christ coming back from the grave the first fruits of them that slept; no ghost of His former self. In the ancient world, when the longing for a life beyond the grave expressed itself in poetry, the son who sought to embrace his father in the world of spirits finds that he is only embracing a shadow. But it was no shadow that breathed peace in the upper room, and left behind Him that commission of power which still works mightily. It was no phantom which during forty days worked out for the Apostles the polity of the Christian Church. It was no phantom which stood by the shores of the lake and cheered the fishermen to fresh effort, and partook of their meal. It was Christ Himself. S. John the eagle-eyed Apostle only gives expression to our convictions when he cried out, 'It is the

Lord!' Neither did Christ come back from the dead in another nature in which His human soul had been transferred out of the universal life into which it had been absorbed at death. It was no migratory soul, it was no new manifestation of soul out of the great heart of the universe. No, once more; it was Christ Himself who returned, with this difference, that now there belongs to Him a fresh glory of correspondence, a resurrection body adapted to a resurrection life. Christ dies in His human nature; the same Christ rises again in a body corresponding to that in which He first lived on the earth.

II. On Easter Day then we have a fresh hold on that *I*, myself, my own personality, that strange mixture of powers, influences, victories, catastrophes, possibilities, which God started in the world when He sent me here, and which Easter tells me will go on for ever. Now, I can never cease to be. I cannot step aside and be forgotten, I cannot be lost in the crowd; it is an Easter message for weal or for woe. I am alive with God; I must live for ever. Look at Jesus Christ stepping down into the world with its living stream. There is the strong bias towards an ever setting off from the sin of our first parents, still a living force which He grapples with and arrests, but only through death. The faith of Abraham is still alive; the God-guided life of Israel, the preparation of the prophets, the teaching of types, Greek wisdom flows by on the current; Roman discipline, Eastern conquests, still throb in its waters. Men and women passing and repassing shed from their path the ripple of fashion or custom or tradition. And into this Christ came, corresponding through human memory and divine consciousness; He was linked on to the past; human experience moulded His human character; He goes to the marriage feast; He meets sin, and disease, and death, and sorrow; He is buffeted by the waves of this troubled world; He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And then, as He passes through death, sin and sorrow have no power to leave their marks upon His nature; He corresponds now to all that is spiritual, peaceful, heavenly in human nature. He dwells with the spirit of man, and passes out of our sight ever to live to make intercession for us. So it has been, so it is with each of us. God puts each individual soul into this wide-reaching life, whose tides sweep by us out of a past lost in the mists of history, and which eddy away into eternity. We are attached as it were to this great life, and we never can cease to be, nor lose our personality. To this life we correspond as natural bodies; to the life hereafter we shall correspond as spiritual bodies. And so we draw life from our surroundings. The stream as it passes us, too, is alive with the life of the past. As soon as we are conscious, the living taint of Adam's sin wakes up strong within us. The faith which mounts up in our hearts is alive with the faith of angels, with believing souls that have gone before. For so the wisdom, the discipline, and the empires of the past influence the eddies which carry us on, and we draw life from our surroundings. We start with a nature which we inherit from those who have gone before us; we are made and influenced by the life all around us—children of the age.

III. What are we doing in life which Easter tells us is so precious and so momentous in its issue? What are we doing with that rich heritage which flows up, with those surroundings that mould us, that character which is gradually being formed in us, that character by which I shall be known as a separate person through all eternity?

The worldly nature. Ah! we know how people try to get away from themselves, and to seek refuge in what others say and others do. Not only do they err and stray like lost sheep, but they think, and they read, and they follow fashion like sheep as well. We know how people dislike to be alone, how they need constant amusement, and constant means of forgetting themselves. But the time comes when they find themselves face to face with self and with the self that cannot die. How strange! How strongly such legends as the Wandering Jew have impressed themselves upon the imagination of mankind! The wandering sinner fain would die and lose himself and be forgotten, but cannot, and must live on, dead while he lives. It is a dread type of the personality which never dies—which leads on into the other world. Surely it is an Easter question for us to-day. How am I corresponding to the world all around us? What effect is it having on my character? Many, many souls when they are conscious within of the evil tendency, instead of wrestling with it as Christ wrestled with evil in the world, contentedly acquiesce in it, and say it is human nature; and more and more they are alive only to what is base and animal in the world. The idea that nature, as they call it, means unregulated desire, and was meant to be gratified, turns them into swine, and the world into a large stye of sensual gratification. Can the sensual really hope that a life like that is to live for ever? God forbid!

Or others again, amid the dread forces of pain and sorrow—those stern mothers of great virtues, the test of the true and noblest graces—if they fall beneath them, bowed down with pain and crushed with sorrow, they would fain curse God and die; to them too it is hardly a message of comfort that the life of which they know so little, and which they so utterly dread, will last for ever. It must have come across many minds after the first flush of youth is over, and when disappointment has weighted the footsteps, and loss after loss has left them lonely and poor, as the sun dips below the horizon, and the night of death comes creeping towards them as a stealthy mist which will enwrap them and stifle them in its folds: 'Would it not have been better,' they cry, 'that I should never have lived to feel this pain and void, and to be paralysed with this gathering spectral gloom?'

The blessing of sorrow. And it is then that we hear the triumphant notes of the Apostle, '*Now*,' working up through the discords, '*Now* is Christ risen from the dead.' It is then that we hear our Lord's own voice, which cheers us with its confident ring: 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' It is better, if it be God's will, that we should be born to a life of sorrow, pain, disappointment, poverty, or loss, than not to have been born at all. Now, it may be, we are in correspondence only with those things which, in God's mercy, are to develop the richness, the fulness of our character. When we have passed through death, the capacities will be made manifest; then we shall know what is meant by satisfaction, by joy, by life itself; then we shall draw life from our own surroundings without pain to distress, or sorrow to hinder, or sin to spoil, complete in Him. I have read of an exquisite torture which consisted of this, putting the unhappy prisoner in a cell of which the floor, the ceiling, the walls were all constructed of mirrors so that he could never escape from himself, until it worked upon his imagination and destroyed his reason.

Never to die! it is a tremendous truth, a truth which carries with it a damnatory clause. Never to die. It is a glorious hope to one who has realised what life is, and the privilege and joy of living on as a person in a kingdom of life, of being admitted to share in privileges which can only be developed in eternity.

IV. 'The firstfruits of them that slept.' Where our Forerunner has gone before, there we hope to follow, and to find in death, not a dread necessity to which we must bow, but a sleep with a glorious awakenment, in which we have slept off the aching pains, the fatigue and weariness of buffeting with sin, the fever of pleasures which can never satisfy. Only, if death is not to be that which will leave us to face the other world bare and unready, surely we must learn now more than we have hitherto done to correspond with those bits of immortality which reach down into our daily life. In prayer we correspond with realities which death itself will not alter. Paradise, it has been said, is but a first communion which lasts for ever. 'If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' Easter, while it speaks to us of the continuity, speaks to us of the dignity, of life. Do not let us lean on artificial life and forget its true nobility and purpose. Do not let us mistake gaslight for the sun, or the heated room for the breath of heaven, or amusement for purpose, or recreation for the end of life. Children of the Resurrection must feel that life was given for something higher than amusement, and was capable of something better than a mere correspondence to comfort, or to scientific production of luxury; and it cannot be right to be so absorbed in business as to produce spiritual atrophy, or to be so conformed to the world as to lose the higher capacities altogether. Banter is a sorry substitute for wit; criticism of others a poor form of conversation; life which is a succession of pleasures varied with excitement is a travesty of the earnest purpose which begins here to work for eternity. Perhaps we hardly realise the damage that is done to life by letting ourselves go without restraint; while we allow life to lose its dignity when it loses its purpose; when happiness is dispelled by the intoxication of pleasure which leaves us, when the spell is over, the colder and the more weary, ready to offer a prize for a new pleasure, or to decorate the discoverer of a new sensation. It is sad to see so many Samsons with their God-given strength, when Philistines menace on all sides, shorn and weakened and blinded in a world which first has flattered, then captivated, and then betrayed. It is more sad still to see a Saul that started as king of men, head and shoulders above his fellows, tampering with allegiance, failing slightly in his duty, and then failing deeper, driven on to gloom where superstition sits like ghosts upon the ruined altars which once were inhabited by the Spirit. It is sad to see a David passing from confident, innocent boyhood into an old age rifled by sin, an example of penitence for a life which had failed, instead of being a living monument of a soul alive to God and swept by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Correspondence with the Eternal. Surely Easter Day tells us with no uncertain voice that correspondence must be set up with things which have in them the elements of eternity. It is a sad experience with many a soul that Easter, the festival of the Resurrection, only ushers in a return to the state of spiritual torpor which was galvanised into a semblance of life by the observance of Lent. There is still a large belief in some minds that fasting means fasting from sin if it means anything at all, and that now Lent is over it is possible to go back with impunity to those habits which, though they are not right, cannot be said to be wrong. The old rule is torn up, and we drift on through days littered with wasted opportunities, on each side of which there rise up those banks of *débris*, work spoilt and left undone, opportunities missed, good tainted, which we grind off as we slowly slip down the mountain side of life. More than strange, then, it is to see how many, now that Lent is over, will largely contract their devotions and religious exercises, as if one form of penance suitable only to Lent was going to church.

But children of the Resurrection, those who believe in life that is one and unending, know that it is just in these things that they must keep up correspondence with true and holy things which Lent only adjusted; but when the sleep of death is over, then the pain which is pleasure and the pleasure which is pain will begin of seeing God. And that power of seeing Him should be cultivated here in the heart, which will not deliberately admit the obscuring elements of even one sin. Lent, if it has taught us anything at all, should have taught us this—that pleasure is satisfaction, and the highest pleasure and the highest satisfaction is the satisfaction of the spirit, and that the imagery of the Book of Revelation, which seems to represent heaven as one large temple, and life as one long service, may after all be not so incredible or so impossible as it seems to be at first sight. Here, too, we have felt something of the joy of the Resurrection; here, too, we have found that we have not been taken in, that the highest claims of Christianity are not visionary and unpractical, that the sermons of centuries are not reiteration of an exploded error, that the blessed dead did not die resting on a delusion. We have not made ourselves miserable for no purpose, or imagined sin where there was none, nor taken up a cross when we should rather have taken up the staff of a vigorous life. We have felt that out of struggle, out of sorrow, out of self-restraint, life has been holier, wiser, and better, and that now we are taking our places for eternity, building on the one foundation of a life which has been laid even by Jesus; no mere erection of wood, hay, stubble, which will be burned by fire, but a life's work which shall abide, in which God Himself has become known to us in sacrament and in prayer, so that when we go out from the world in obedience to the summons of death, we do not go out from Him, but go to a fuller and a richer correspondence with a richer and fuller life, from which pain, temptation, sin, and failure have fallen away, and have left us in full and perfect enjoyment of His presence—'Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming.' CANON NEWBOLT.

Easter.

The Lord is risen indeed. S. Luke xxiv. 34.

THE lapse of centuries has not diminished the joy of that announcement. The gladness and peace of Easter rest this day now upon our souls no less than in those early days of the Church's history, when the words 'Christ is risen' are said to have been the formula of joyful salutation between one Christian and another.

It is an announcement that binds all Christendom together. East and West are united in the commemoration of the fact of this day. And the thought that the Saviour is risen, common to-day to every Christian heart, makes us thrill with the hope of far-off possibilities to the world, to be derived from the moral force of a united Christendom.

In the face of our conflicts and controversies, our misunderstandings and suspicions, Easter Day lays before the Church the vision of an essential union. To all of us, whether those perplexed and distracted at rapidity of movement and change of thought, or those chafing and distressed at sluggishness and inaction, comes the reconciling message of Easter that there is one Lord and one faith. To all of us, however eager on one side to shake ourselves free from the bondage of the letter, however loath on the other to part from one syllable of an inherited formula, the message of Easter sends its hallowing restraint and its liberating power.

From whatever side you look, this article of the Christian creed speaks of comfort and of hope. To a world craving to see beyond the darkness which girdles an earthly horizon, it suggests that the aspiration after life, even the passionate desire of a personal reunion, may receive fulfilment in some future realm of extended consciousness. To the Church of Christ it brings the explanation both of her power and of her mission—her power derived from the life of her Risen Lord, her mission to realise in the world the perpetual communion with that glorified life by love and courage, by purity and sacrifice, by wisdom and forbearance. Above all, it irradiates with a flood of light the person of Christ, whose appearance and power in the history of the world remains otherwise a dark enigma.

The Resurrection of Christ was the very foundation of the Church.

I. I will not weary you with going in detail through the evidence in favour of the fact of the Resurrection. But it is essential to bear in mind that however freshly Easter Day reminds us of the circumstance, we are concerned really with an event of ancient history. Positive testimony in such a case is not possible in the degree that is required in scientific analysis or in a modern court of law. But so far as facts of antiquity are capable of proof, the evidence in favour of Christ's Resurrection exceeds, both in variety and in strength, the testimony for almost any great fact in ancient history.

The New Testament represents not one piece of testimony, but many independent witnesses agreeing together. The writings of S. Paul, of the Apostles S. Peter and S. John who saw the empty tomb, and of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, assume that among the first Christians, the fact of Christ's Resurrection was never doubted. In the Acts of the Apostles the speeches of S. Peter and of S. Paul are based on that belief. The writers of the Four Gospels, when referring to the event and describing the appearances of the Risen Lord, are clear and simple in their description, and are free from the inflated and exaggerated style which characterises narratives of the miraculous in contemporary apocryphal writings. The very variety of the recorded appearances makes for the simplicity and truthfulness of the account.

The difference in detail between the various accounts is not sufficient to shake their claim to veracity, while it constitutes a valid argument against collaboration. Writing for the edification of Christian readers, the Evangelists describe the facts on which the Christian Faith was founded; there is no appearance of their writing as advocates of any special view, or of defending any controversial position. The same may even be said of S. Paul's description of the appearances after the Resurrection. The celebrated fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is not written to defend the Resurrection of Christ from the dead—that fact the Corinthians did not dispute. S. Paul wrote to defend the doctrine of the general resurrection from the dead, which certain Corinthian teachers had called in question. The Apostle defended the general doctrine primarily upon the fact of the Resurrection of Christ, the testimony to which, by enumeration in detail, he deemed to be incontrovertible.

I need not enlarge upon the evidence supplied by the Apostles themselves—their altered attitude, their change of character and conduct, resulting, so far as we can see, solely from the conviction produced by the Resurrection of the Lord. Analogous evidence from an opposite side is furnished by the attitude of the Sadducees, the deniers of a Resurrection, whose fury and vehemence against the Christians dated from the first public declarations that Jesus had risen from the grave. Nor should we neglect the testimony of Christian sacred days and festivals. The evidence of institutions is often more convincing than that of writings. And the change from the Jewish Sabbath, with its strict and holy observance, to the Christian first day of the week represents a remarkable transition of usage that could only be accounted for by the intense vividness of the belief in the fact thus commemorated. Similarly this day of Easter, the most holy and gladsome centre of the Christian year, was observed from the earliest times, and the question of the right date of its observance was a fruitful source of contention so early as the second century.

Now it is obvious that in the Gospel accounts we are not dealing with a literary fiction based upon a development of the Pharisaic teaching respecting the Resurrection. The Jewish doctrine of a final

Resurrection and judgment formed no nucleus for such a narrative. It may, I think, be taken for granted that the account of the Resurrection is either wholly true, or a fiction strictly original in type.

If the Apostles and the early Christians were ready to lay down their lives in support of this narrative of the Resurrection, we cannot question that they believed intensely in its reality. It is impossible to suppose, knowing what we do of the lives and character of the Apostles, that their lives were devoted to the dissemination of an imposture. But granting their honesty, had they been deceived?

II. Two main lines of explanation upon this supposition are advanced in the present day, the one psychological, asserting the visionary character of the recorded appearances, the other physical, and asserting that the Lord never having really died, the recorded appearances were natural.

1. It seems impossible to satisfy the requirements of the narrative on the assumption that the appearances of the Risen Lord were only visionary and had no objective reality. The variety of the appearances recorded, and of the conditions under which they were made, practically excludes the possibility of mental illusion. Optical delusions are always conceivable under favouring conditions. But can the conditions be described here as favourable to the theory? The condition of mind of those who firmly believed the Lord to be lying dead in His grave would not favour the imaginary belief that He had unexpectedly reappeared. Hallucination, which may reasonably be ascribed to the overwrought nerves of an isolated witness, loses all probability when it is ascribed to large numbers, at different intervals of time, and in different scenes. Contagion of popular credulity is one thing, but an epidemic of optical delusions and mental hallucinations agreeing with one another has no shadow of probability. And if there is any credibility in S. Paul's statement that the Risen Lord had been seen of five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater number he could still call as witnesses, the impossibility of this explanation needs no further demonstration.

2. The other alternative that the Lord did not die upon the Cross, but that His appearances were due to His having recovered in the tomb from a deathlike trance, has been at different times suggested.

In this theory the unexpected rapidity of the death on the Cross and the coolness of the rock-hewn tomb are the most striking features. The theory is, of course, absolutely devoid of evidence, and belongs rather to the region of ingenious speculation. The instances of such death-like swoons are not sufficiently numerous to commend the probability of a theory, which has no evidence to go upon, and is simply advanced in order to avoid the conclusions resulting from the simple narrative. It is somewhat tempting to reflect what sort of a reception such an unsupported assertion would have received had it been introduced upon the Christian side in a controversy dealing with literary evidence.

The death on the Cross was at the time never doubted. If any one doubted, it was the Roman soldier, who by his spear-thrust seemed resolved to remove the least shadow of the suspicion of life. Joseph and the women at the Cross did not doubt it; they prepared to embalm the Body. The chief priests did not doubt it; they set a watch for fear the Body should be stolen. The Apostles and disciples did not doubt it; His death had taken away the trust that He was the Messiah that should have redeemed Israel.

III. Let us turn for a few moments to some aspects of the teaching of the Resurrection. It has often been raised as an objection to Christianity that the teaching of Easter Day has attracted thousands to accept it from merely selfish motives. This objection, which is in reality another form of the attack so often made against any teaching of reward and punishment, would have more weight, if what is termed the selfish motive had tended in the case of the best representatives of the faith to lower their moral conception of life, if it had diminished their capacities of sacrifice on behalf of the community at large. This certainly cannot be shown, and although the phraseology may often be too materialistic, it is so because the religious thought which underlies it is concerned with the present practical endeavour to prepare the powers of the spirit for the life that has yet to be revealed.

So far as our subject is concerned the misapprehension frequently arises from the tendency to confound the manner of the Resurrection of Christ with the other instances of the dead being raised recorded in the Gospel narrative. The distinction is one of vital importance. The raising in their case was a restoration to the conditions of terrestrial life, to be terminated yet again by the visitation of death. The Resurrection of Christ as described in the Gospels was of a different order. The Body was indeed raised; but it was different. The sleep of death had passed away, and the Body was changed. It was no longer a natural Body but a spiritual Body. Then for a short period of forty days, for the building up of the faith of those first believers, there was manifested even on earth the union of the human and the divine under conditions not of frail flesh, but of perfected and glorified humanity.

It is this which explains the manifestation to them alone whose faith, however dim, had reached out through the darkness to the light of the Kingdom of Heaven. The belief in a Divine Revelation was not to result from compulsion of the earthly senses. The Christian walk was to be by faith, not by sight. The high privilege of beholding the Risen Lord was accorded to those whose moral faculties, however clouded with doubt or fear, had victoriously declared themselves on the side not of the prince of this world, but on the side of Him who, though disowned by His countrymen and crucified by the Romans, was still the true Prince of Life, and the one hope of redemption.

Difficult as this thought is, it should help to remind us that in the Resurrection of Christ we have received something much more than the assurance of personal immortality. Not the prolongation of life under the conditions of earth, but in some sense or other our union with God is, though we so little realise it, the highest aspiration of our being. Of this the Risen Lord has given us the pledge. How it may be realised, where and by what law, transcends our present faculties. But we shall be with Him; we shall be like Him; and our body, like the Body of His Resurrection, though the same, shall be glorified and transfigured.

That manifestation, then, of the Risen Lord, was mercifully permitted to satisfy the capacities of earthly witnesses. And while it has delivered us from the mysticism of a pantheism absorbing individuality, it has supplied a spiritual and not a material conception of the continued personal identity. While it sets the stamp of sanctity upon the body of earthly activity and earthly suffering, it points us forwards to a more perfect existence, in which the human powers shall be transfigured, and the hope of closer union with the divine shall not daily be frustrated by the defilement of our failures and our faults.

The Resurrection of Christ has thus given an answer to the deepest questions of our life, individual and social. The prospect of unlimited fulfilment is laid open before our desire for progress and advance. The instinct which tells that we are something more than mere bubbles on the surface of some material current of existence is not only satisfied, but is elevated and strengthened, purified and guided by the thought of a risen life shared with the Christ Himself.

It is no flight of irreverent speculation which foresees the faithful servant, who has entered into the joy of his Lord, ministering through age after age of expanding privilege and power, with more disciplined will and glorified faculties, to the service of the Risen Master.

We have not time here to consider the significance to the whole Church of Christ conveyed by the teaching of the Resurrection. But before we close, let us for one moment reflect how each in the little circle of his life can find in that Resurrection the assurance of the Master's living fellowship and sympathy with him, the plea for peace, the protest against misunderstanding and suspicion, the explanation of trials, the solace of sorrow and separation, breathing the peace of God even in the silent chamber of death. For we walk by faith, not by sight. The sight of our eyes seems to tell us that the objects of tenderest love are gone from us, because we see the cold white clay, no longer the living flesh. The Resurrection of Christ speaks to our human affections another message. Numbed, indeed, in our feelings at the bitterness of earthly parting, or heart-wrung by the sense of loneliness on earth, we may kiss the last farewell on the loved face. But the Lord is risen indeed—that revelation standeth sure. For the freed soul we know, we believe, that to be with Christ is indeed far better. Ah, may the union spent with Him in this life, disgraced and shamed though it be by our inconsistency and our weakness, pass through that portal of death, no longer unfriendly, now that the Lord of love has trodden the threshold, and be perfected to each of us in the joy of the great Resurrection! For that hope let us wait, while others go before. And may the departure of each loved soul from our midst, while emphasising the duty of more work and greater courage to those who remain, become to us a fresh manifestation of the Risen Lord, reminding us of the call to the spiritual life, of the love that cannot leave us orphans or comfortless, of the pity that finds in tears the means of binding us more closely, more strongly to Himself. If the Lord's question to us be, 'Why weepest thou?' let our faith respond with joy that may convince the world, 'The Lord is risen indeed.' PROFESSOR RYLE.

Effect of Belief in Immortality upon Conduct.

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. ACTS xxiv. 14-16.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD said truly, 'Conduct is three-fourths of life.'

Is it affected practically by belief in the Resurrection?

Once the question would have been needless,—or worse. But now the fact is challenged by a whole literature.

I. A different theory of life is extant:

1. That this life is sufficient for activity, pleasure, duty. That morality and justice are assured by human sanctions. That con-

siderations drawn from another sphere cannot be anything but barren speculations.

2. Some go further, asserting that such considerations are hurtful. That they disturb adjustments, distract attention, change quality of virtues. (*e.g.* ‘Lay not up treasures,’ etc.—and political economy. ‘Vengeance is mine,’ etc.—and Law).

Over against this stands the Christian idea.

The relative shortness of this life.

Relative quality of its pleasures and pains.

A Navy officer, detailed to instruct his fellows at school at Newport, bore with their insubordination and adjusted himself to them, saying, ‘I may have to take a long voyage in the same ship with some of them one of these days.’

II. Now it must be evident that a clear belief either way must affect conduct.

Things which are right and wise on one theory are not upon the other.

A system of government good aboard a ship making a voyage would be ruinous in a city on land.

III. As a matter of fact the belief in future life has been in the past the only efficient motive and restraint.

It does not need that a motive should come up into consciousness to be operative.

So of morality; it is ‘Not the law of a carnal commandment, but the power of an endless life.’

Our ideas of social and individual justice are bound up with belief in future existence. As thus:

1. The inequalities of life,—unless referred to the future they cannot be accounted for or defended.

2. Where God's judgment comes to be widely doubted, justice becomes impossible.

IV. ‘But after all this is no proof?’

Be not so sure; there are other roads to certitude than through a syllogism.

Hope, fear, love, are all ‘unreasonable,’ but still the surest of all things.

There are

> ‘Truths that wake to perish never,
> Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
>   Nor man nor boy,
> Nor ought that is at enmity with joy
> Can utterly abolish or destroy.’

S. D. M‘CONNELL.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Christ risen our Justification.

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.
ROMANS iv. 25.

I. ON the Cross, our Lord gave Himself for us; through the Resurrection He giveth Himself to us. On the Cross, He was the Lamb which was slain for the sins of the world; in the Resurrection, that Body which was slain, became life-giving. Before, as the Flesh of the Word, it healed the bodies which touched it; now it imparted life to the soul. As S. Paul says, 'the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit'; to give life to the world, to all who should become members of that Body. Through the Incarnation He is, in this way also, the Mediator between God and man, that, as in His sacred person, the divine and human natures are for ever united, so through His risen and glorified humanity, those qualities, which are communicated to His human nature, by it flow on to us. He gave life to that sinless flesh which He took, that that life might thence pass into all, by making them members of that Body.

Hence in Holy Scripture, the Body of Christ is, as well the Body which He bare, and which He offered, and which in the Holy Eucharist He gives to believers, and which believers are. 'We being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread.' They who are faithful, by His amazing condescension, become what they receive, the Body of Christ. As His in-deified manhood is not absorbed or lost in the ocean of His divinity, although filled with it, so doth He yet take the Church into Himself, a mystical Body; He is, by the Holy Spirit, its living, informing, vivifying principle, purifying and making resplendent with grace ineffable those who are its true members.

This, then, is the joy and gift of our Easter Festival, our very risen Lord Himself. To the Church it is yearly true, 'The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.' Before, all was laid up for us, but we had it not. By the Resurrection is the gift of the Spirit and engrafting into Him; by it is 'forgiveness of sin, and removal of punishment, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, and adoption as sons, and brotherhood with Christ, yea, oneness with Him, and eternal inheritance,' because all these are in Him, and by it we become partakers of Him and of all which is His. Yea, this is the bliss of all our festivals, that they not only shadow out a likeness and conformity between the Head and the members, our Redeemer and us on whom His name is called, but there is, through the power of His Cross and Resurrection, a real inworked conformity, a substance and reality.

II. Where are now the fruits which betoken that justifying, sanctifying presence? We have been justified freely; we hope, in the end, to be found in Him; accepted in Him. But what is our state now? Ever since our baptismal birth, that life and life-giving presence has been growing or decreasing in us. 'Nothing abideth at one stay.' Day by day, and year by year, as we struggled resolutely against what was evil in us, or through thoughtlessness and wilfulness allowed the vanities of the world, 'the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life' to master our wills, and distract our minds from God, that gracious presence has increased or diminished in us. Blessed are they who feel of themselves, really and truly, not in words only, that they are 'poor, and miserable, and blind and naked,' so that this their misery has indeed brought them to Him who counsels us, 'Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' For He truly alone is the medicine to heal our wounded souls; He alone is the true riches; He Himself the robe of righteousness, and holiness, and immortality, which will fold around our scars, and wounds, and shame, and sin, and give us perfect soundness, healing all our diseases, and 'covering' us with His own glorious 'light, as with a garment.'

III. There is for us one course only, one way, one hope, one life. However we may have fallen, our hope is yet sure, if, at the last, we be found in Him. But we are in Him only if we 'love Him and keep His commandments.' Weak though our faith still be, and cold our love, and we wearied often and downcast at present weakness, the fruit of past sin, and the countenance of our God often, as it seems, shrouded from us, still, if there be in us increased humility, and watchfulness, and obedience, and victory over our besetting sin, His justifying, saving presence is, we may hope, with us, and will, if we pray for it, abide with us to the end. In whatever degree we have faithfully used the past blessed solemn season, for retirement into ourselves, being alone with God, humiliation and self-restraint, we shall have gained a blessing. He who arose through the unopened tomb, and needed not that the great stone should be rolled away for Him, and passed through the closed doors, will enter unseen into the hearts which close themselves and all their powers and senses against all His enemies, that He alone may come in at His will and dwell there.

E. B. PUSEY.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Christ Risen dieth no more.

Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more. Romans vi. 9.

IN these words we have two points which are at the bottom of all true Easter joy; first, the reality of the Resurrection, 'Christ being raised from the dead'; secondly, the perpetuity of Christ's risen life, 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.'

Now the Resurrection brings such joy to the human soul, first of all, because it asserts that which is by no means written legibly for all men on the face of nature and of life, the truth that the spiritual is higher than the material; the truth that, in this universe, spirit counts for something more than matter. There are, no doubt, abstract arguments which might go to show that this is the case; but the Resurrection is a palpable fact which means this, if it means anything at all, that the ordinary laws of animal existence are visibly, upon sufficient occasion, set aside in obedience to a higher spiritual force. It was, we all of us know, no natural force, like that of growth, which raised Jesus Christ our Lord from His grave. And, I repeat it, such a fact as this is worth a great deal more than abstract arguments. It can always be fallen back upon when we are in no mood for abstract thought: it leaves little or no room for mistake or self-deception.

I. 'Christ being raised from the dead.' The Resurrection is not merely an article of the Creed, it is a fact in the history of mankind. That our Lord Jesus Christ was 'begotten of His Father before all worlds' is also an article of the Christian faith, but then it has nothing to do with human history; and so it cannot be shown to have taken place, like any event say in the life of Julius Cæsar, by the reported testimony of eyewitnesses. It belongs to another sphere. It is believed simply on account of the proved trustworthiness of Him who has taught us this truth on His own authority about His eternal person. But that Christ rose from the dead is a fact which depends on the same sort of testimony as any event in the life of Cæsar, with this difference, that no one ever thought it worth his while, so far as I know, to risk his life in order to maintain that Cæsar defeated Vercingetorix or Pompey. Our Lord, as you know, was seen five times on the day that He rose from the dead. Mary Magdalene saw Him in the garden. She saw Him again with the other Mary and Salome when He allowed them to hold Him by the feet, and to worship Him. At a later hour of the day He appeared to Peter. In the afternoon He discovered Himself to Cleopas and another disciple who were walking on the Emmaus road. In the evening He was with the Apostles, excepting Thomas. He showed them His hands and His feet as those of the crucified ; He ate before them ; He gave them authority to remit and retain sins. And, after this first day, six separate appearances are recorded, although it is implied that these appearances were only a few of those which actually occurred. At the interval of a week He appeared again to the eleven. Thomas was with them now, and He convinced Thomas that He was really risen. On another occasion they saw Him on a mountain in Galilee ; on another, He was seen by five hundred persons, more than one-half of whom were still alive when S. Paul described the fact to the Corinthians. On another, He appeared to S. Peter, to S. Thomas, to S. Bartholomew, and others, on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias. On another, He had a private interview with S. James the Less. Once more He was with all the Apostles at Jerusalem before He led them out to Bethany, gave them His last promise, His last benediction, and went up to heaven before their eyes. And when He was gone, His Apostles went forth, to do and to teach, no doubt, a great deal else, but they went forth especially in this capacity, as witnesses of the fact of the Resurrection. That was a fact of which they were certain, for which they were prepared to give testimony, if need were, with their blood. Read the Acts of the Apostles. The theme of the earliest Christian preaching is always this, that Christ had really risen. The reality of His Resurrection was so certain that it emboldened and even forced His followers to address themselves to the conversion of the world. 'We cannot but speak the things,' they said, 'which we have seen and heard.'

II. To-day's festival is full of joy because it ushers in Christ's risen life ; a fact to us of undying significance. The Resurrection, you observe, was not an isolated miracle, done and then over, leaving things much as they had been before. The risen Christ is not, like Lazarus, marked off from every other man as one who had visited the realms of death, but knowing that he must again, ere many years pass, be a tenant of the grave. 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.' His risen Body is made up of flesh, bone, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature ; but then it has superadded qualities. It is so spiritual that it can pass through closed doors without collision or disturbance. It is beyond the reach of those causes which, slowly or swiftly, bring down our bodies to the dust. Throned in the heavens, now as during the forty days on earth, it is endowed with the beauty, with the glory, of an eternal youth. Being raised from the dead, it dies no more.

III. Now, observe that this fact—the perpetuity of the life of the risen Jesus—is the guarantee of the perpetuity of His Church. Alone among all forms of society which bind men together, the Church of

Christ is insured against complete dissolution. When our Lord was born, the civilised world was almost entirely comprised within the Roman empire, a vast social power which may well have appeared, as it did appear to the men of that age, destined to last for ever. Since then the Roman empire has as completely disappeared from the earth as if it never had been. And other kingdoms and dynasties have risen up, and have in turn gone their way. Nor is there any warrant or probability that any one of the states or forms of civil government which exist at the present time will always last. And there are men who tell us that the kingdom of Christ is, or will be, no exception to the rule; that it too has seen its best days and is passing. We Christians know that they are wrong; that, whatever else may happen, one thing is impossible, the complete effacement of the Church of Jesus Christ. And what is our reason for this confidence? It is because we know that Christ's Church, although having likeness to other societies of men in her outward form and mien, is unlike them inwardly and really. She strikes her roots far and deep into the invisible; she draws strength from sources which cannot be tested by our political or social experience. Like her Master, she has meat to eat that men know not of. Above all, she is endowed with the presence of His undying love. 'I am with you always,' He said, 'even to the end of the world.' Christ's superiority to the assaults of death is the measure of the immortality of His Church. Our confidence in the perpetuity of the Church is only one form of our faith in the unfailing life of the risen Redeemer. Certainly, though the Church of Christ is insured against dissolution, it is not insured against vicissitudes, not even against corruptions more or less extensive. Its Lord is divine; the men who compose it are human. It has not always triumphed. It has even fallen back before an impure fanaticism like Mohammedanism, as in North Africa and Western Asia. It has been corrupted, as we know too well, sometimes by large and unwarranted additions to the original creed of Christendom, sometimes by forgetfulness of truths which were constantly on the lips of Apostles and martyrs. And then, upon corruption, division has followed; so that it no longer presents a united front to the powers of evil. And there have been times when it seemed as if the world was right, and the Church was on the point of disappearance from among men, so great has been the weakness and corruption of her representatives. And to say that she would perish would have been reasonable if she had been only at bottom a human society, founded by some human genius who had passed away. What is so striking in her history, making it so unlike that of any other society whatever, is the power of self-restoration (as men term it) which she has again and again manifested, partially or as a whole, showing that the tendency to dissolution was arrested by an inward influence against which ordinary circumstances and causes could not prevail. And what is this but the presence of Christ, who, being risen, dieth no more? And, for the future, who shall say? She may or may not, here or elsewhere, enjoy the friendship of civil governments; she may be welcomed in high places; she may be persecuted in catacombs. This, this only is certain: she shall exist while the world shall last. 'God is in the midst of her, and therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved; but God hath showed His voice, and the earth shall melt away.'

IV. And, lastly, this festival brings a joy, such as does no other day in the year, to the believing soul. It tells us the secret, as it displays the model, of perseverance in the life of godliness. Christ, risen from death, dying no more, is the model of our new life in grace. I do not mean that absolute sinlessness is attainable by any Christian here. 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.' But, at least, faithfulness in our intentions, avoidance of known sources of danger, escape from presumptuous sins, innocence, as the Psalmist puts it, of the great offence—these things are possible, and indeed are necessary. Those lives which are made up of alternating recovery and relapse—recovery, perhaps, during Lent, followed by relapse after Easter, or even lives lived, as it were, with one foot in the grave, without anything like a strong vitality, with their feeble prayers, with their half-indulged inclinations, with their weaknesses which may be physical, but which a really regenerate will should at once away with—men risen from the dead, yet without any seeming promise of endurance in life—what would S. Paul say to these? 'Christ,' he would say, 'being risen from the dead, dieth no more.' Just as He left His tomb on this Easter morning, once for all, so should the soul, once risen, be dead indeed unto sin. There must be no hovering about the sepulchre, no treasuring the grave-clothes, no secret hankering after the scent and atmosphere of the guilty past. If any who hear me humbly hope that they have, by God's grace, during this Lent attained to a spiritual resurrection; if, in their case, the words have been fulfilled, 'The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall live,' then be you well assured that you have great need to see that you persistently set your affections on things above, that you desire, even patiently, to live as those who are alive from the dead, and who are yielding their members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

H. P. LIDDON.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Images of the Resurrection.

If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. ROMANS vi. 5.

THE Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is apt in our day to be considered mainly from one point of view, that of the proof which it affords of the claims of our Lord's person and mission: in other words, of the truth of the Christian faith. When doubt is in the air Christians naturally look about them for the best reason to give for the hope that is in them, and no reason that can be given for the claim of Christian revelation to unfold the true mind of God is more certain as a matter of fact, or so convincing to the majority of fair and thoughtful minds, as the Resurrection of our Saviour from the dead. He Himself pointed to it before He suffered, as the sign that He was what He claimed to be, as the certificate which He would give the world that He had come from God; and, when He had risen, His Apostles rested their whole case upon it as being the foundation fact of the creed which they undertook to proclaim to the nations of the world. In the first years of Christianity, as at this moment, the religion which we Christians profess must answer with its life for the literal truth of our Lord's Resurrection. S. Paul has said it: 'If Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain, your faith is also vain.' The importance of the consideration cannot be exaggerated, and we may not wonder that of late the evidential value of the Resurrection should have occupied a foremost place in the mind of man.

There is a second aspect of the Resurrection which, as life goes on, appeals to the older among us with an ever-increasing force—I mean the guidance, the support, the comfort it affords us in our thoughts about the dead. Each year as it passes reduces the number of the friends of our youth, until by far the larger part of them have passed out of our sight, and are somewhere in the world beyond the grave. There they are, the old people of a former generation who were kind to us as children, the grown-up people to whom we were related—father and mother, aunts, uncles, there they are, our own contemporaries perhaps, a wife, a husband, a brother, a sister, school-fellows, college friends, partners, associates, rivals in the struggle of life; or even—and this comes home to us more closely—even those who belong to the generation below us, our children, our nephews and nieces, young people whom we might have expected to take our place when we had gone, and who have preceded us in the last momentous journey. What are we to think of them? What, at any rate, may we think about those of them who have lived, according to their knowledge and opportunities, in simple dependence on our Heavenly Friend—who have lived for another world? Let us take to heart the saying of the Apostle: 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.' Yes, we shall see them again, those loved ones, when our time of probation has passed, when their and our time of preparation beyond the grave has ended; we shall see them again in the old form, only touched with an immortal brightness, somewhere, somewhere in the courts of the palace of the eternal Christ.

But the Apostle has another lesson to bring before us in relation to the Resurrection. He would have us consider it not as the warrant of our faith, not as the solace of our wounded hearts, but as the mould, the type, the model of our life and character. 'The likeness of His Resurrection'—what can he mean by it? How can you and I be anything like so preternatural an event? What resemblance is possible for us to this bursting forth of a human body from the tomb in which men had laid it into the upper air of light and freedom? Now, one answer to this question may be that at the last day the bodies of Christians will rise just as Christ rose from the humiliation of the grave to the life of glory. This is undoubtedly true, but that view of the Resurrection is not the resurrection of which S. Paul is here thinking. He is thinking of a resurrection of the soul and character, and he says that this resurrection is to be modelled on that of our Lord's. At first sight, I repeat, it is not clear to us how an internal spiritual process can be a copy of, or have resemblance to, an event outside us and palpable to the senses, and yet S. Paul plainly means that the spiritual may correspond with the outward world more nearly than we are apt to think, and that not only to the apprehension of the religious fancy, but in a real sense which may be a matter of observance and of experiment. S. Paul will have it that each of the great events of the earthly manifestation of the Redeemer is reproduced in the life of the Christian, and in particular that as the Christian is crucified with Christ, as he is buried with Christ, so that especially he rises with Christ, and His risen life, in the ratio of its moral reality, corresponds to the resurrection life of our Lord and Saviour. 'If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.'

Already I seem to hear the condemnatory word 'Mysticism'—a word which at once puts the subject to which it is affixed beyond the pale of Englishmen's intelligence and sympathy. And, indeed, this is not always an undeserved ban. There is mysticism and mysticism: a bad and unfruitful mysticism, and a mysticism for which the Apostles themselves were responsible. When a subject in itself sufficiently clear and plain is, whether from mental haziness, or from lack of courage to say simply what is true, enveloped in a fog of verbiage, pious in its general drift and colouring, yet conveying to the hearer no one truth so distinctly that he can grasp and make it his own, this is indeed a deplorable sort of mysticism, if indeed it ought not to be described by quite another name. But when action or language has a secondary meaning, which does not appear on the face of it, or which belongs to a sphere other than that in which it is uttered or takes place, to insist on this meaning is a very legitimate, and indeed an inevitable kind of mysticism, and we need not be frightened at the word when we cannot honestly reject or avoid the thing which the word describes. Thus, Holy Scripture has a second, or, as it is called, a mystical sense, over and above that which the letter conveys, such, for instance, as S. Paul, writing to the Galatians, traces in the history of Sarah and Agar. And sacraments are mystical actions, that is, they mean a good deal more than the outward rite brings before the eye. And the Death and Burial and Resurrection of our Lord have a mystical side or aspect, over and above their transcendent value as events in the world's history. They point to, and indeed they are the operating causes of corresponding emotions within the soul of man. The true Christian, too, here in this life, is crucified with Christ, here in this life he is buried with Christ, here, before his body dies, he rises with Christ. Call this mysticism, if you will; it is a good mysticism. It bears two certificates on its front, the certificate of apostolical authority and the certificate of Christian experience. S. Paul will have it that a Christian must die, be crucified, with Christ. He says of himself, 'I am crucified with Christ'; associating himself with his brethren, he writes, 'Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin'; and here we see what he means, that mass of undisciplined desires and passions which is the governing body in the life of man in the state of nature, or in the Christian who has fallen from grace, which the Apostle calls 'the body of sin,' has to be put to death before any progress can be made in the true life of man. This body of sin must not do what it would, its hands must be nailed to a cross; it must not go whither it would, its feet must be nailed to a cross. It must linger on that cross, to which the Divine will would fain attach it, until it dies. And then it must be buried out of sight so as to have no further contact with the world in which it lived and worked its evil will in the days gone by.

I. Now this is the likeness of the death of Christ, and S. Paul assumes that his readers have been planted together with it, that is, become as closely united to it as a graft becomes to its parent stock. This transfer of the old man, of the old connection of untamed thoughts and lusts would have taken place, in those first days of Christianity, so far as was possible, before the adult convert to the Christian faith was baptized, and before the anxious careful preparation which preceded the reception of the first sacrament. The first thing required in an adult candidate for baptism was repentance, 'whereby he forsakes sin,' and the sincerity of this repentance was proved by willingness to crucify the old man and utterly to abolish the old body of sin.

Now, this death to sin must not be a fainting fit, or a swoon—it must be a real passing out of life. No one has ever denied, so far as I know, that Jesus Christ was crucified, and, until it became an object to deny the truth of the Resurrection, no one ever thought of denying that Jesus Christ really died upon the Cross. It is true that a large number of sufferers have lingered longer on the cross than He did, and Pilate, who was accustomed to witness or to review the details of public executions, was surprised on receiving the news of His death after so short a lapse of time. But the exhaustion which our Lord had suffered during the preceding night would sufficiently account for what took place; and, even if the side had not been pierced with a spear, the report of the Roman officer in charge might have been relied on as being for practical purposes quite as trustworthy an authority as that of a scientific expert had such a one been there. Had Joseph of Arimathea conceived the design of removing Jesus Christ from the Cross before death had taken place, and then, after burying Him for some hours, of conveying Him away by night to Galilee, he would have had more difficulties with the Roman guard than modern advocates of this story appear to imagine; while nothing is less conceivable than that a devoted disciple should have lent himself to a plot which, if it had been successful, would have utterly destroyed his Master's claim upon his own veneration by falsifying the very prediction to which that Master had appealed as the sign of His mission. Jesus really died upon the Cross, and S. Paul insisted on a real death to sin in the convert to Christianity. Of this the Apostle traced the token in the ceremony, at that time universal, of baptism by immersion. The baptismal waters were the grave of the old nature, while through those waters Christ bestowed the gift of the new nature. As Jesus, crucified and dead, was laid in His grave by Joseph of Arimathea, so the Christian, crucified to the world through the body of Christ, descends, as into a tomb, into the baptismal waters. He was buried beneath them, they closed for a moment over him; he was planted, as S. Paul would have said, into the likeness not of Christ's death but of His burial. But the immersion is over, the Christian is lifted from the flood, and this is evidently a correspondent to the Resurrection of Christ, as the descent had been to His burial. Buried with Him in baptism, we know also we are risen with Him; or, as in the text, 'if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.'

II. 'The likeness of His Resurrection.' It cannot mean only a corresponding act to that of our Lord's rising from the dead. Together with, and beyond this, it must mean correspondence with His risen life in its relation to the past, in its present characteristics, in its anticipations of the future. One point of likeness between a true Christian's life and the life of our risen Lord relates to the past. Each has experienced a resurrection, and, if the likeness be a true one, in each case the resurrection is real. When our Lord rose from the dead, He took leave of death for good and all. 'He held,' as He Himself says, 'the keys of death.' Instead of being mastered by death He had conquered and controlled it; and thus says S. Paul, 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.' Here is the difference between the Resurrection of our Lord and the resurrection, for example, of Lazarus. Lazarus had been in the grave four days when he was summoned by Jesus Christ to return to life. It is said, and I will not vouch for the entire accuracy of the account, that Lazarus lived thirty years subsequently, and that he died at the age of sixty, after preaching the Gospel in the South of France. That he was present at an entertainment after his return to life is certain; that he lived for some considerable time is more than probable, and there is another thing related about him, of which this at any rate may be said, that it is true to human nature. It is reported that when he returned to life, his first question was whether he would have to die again, and that on being told that he was still subject to the common doom of man, he was not again seen to smile. Now, this was the very point of S. Paul's triumphant exclamation, that 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.' Our Lord had done, for good and all, with death, and the inexhaustible ingenuity of objectors has never, so far as I know, in any age pretended that, after leaving His grave on Easter morning, He was again committed to it. And, let us be sure of it, a Christian life which is planted in the likeness of the Resurrection will resemble it in its freedom from relapses into the realm of death. Sin is the tomb of the soul, and to have risen from this tomb ought to mean that we do not return to it. 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.' This is the rule of the Christian life. It has risen from the grave of sin for good and all. Not, as S. Paul would have us believe, that a baptized or converted man cannot sin if he would, that the return to sin is as literally impossible for him as the return to the sepulchre in the garden was for the risen Christ. That supposition has been put forward as a Christian truth, but not on apostolic authority. S. Paul knows nothing of any theory of indefectible grace, of grace which so controls the action of the will as to destroy its freedom. On the contrary, while he writes of himself, 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' he also describes his anxiety 'lest after that I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' There is no absolute impossibility in the relapse of a regenerate Christian into moral and spiritual death, but there should be the highest moral probability against anything of the kind. The strength which has been given the Christian warrants him in reckoning himself to be dead indeed unto sin, although he still may be, as the Apostle puts it, 'overtaken in a fault,' or may even, after being enlightened and tasting of the Heavenly gift, so fall away that the difficulty of renewing him again unto repentance is well-nigh insuperable. Still, as has been said by the Apostle James, such a catastrophe as this should be looked on, as in apostolic days it was, as a rare exception. The rule is that the Christian is, like Christ, 'raised from the death of sin': he dies no more.

Now, what is the case with a large number of Christians in our days,—with ourselves? So far are some of us from dying no more that we might also seem to sink down into the tomb at regular intervals. It is said that, under the influence of the great preachers who two centuries ago were admitted to the pulpit of the chapel at Versailles in Lent, the most powerful of the kings of France broke off his debaucheries during the days of penitence, but only to relapse into them again quite regularly after Easter; but, if this was the case, it might unhappily be paralleled in humbler lives, and nearer home. The rays of 'that fierce light that beats upon a throne' are often so pointed by the hand of envy as to make more of the vices than of the virtues of the rulers of mankind; but the absence of this relentless publicity often implies the absence of a safeguard, such as it is, against what is wrong. S. Peter was thinking of humble people who had once done better when he quoted the terrible proverb that 'The dog had returned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'

One predisposing cause of these relapses, of which sufficient account is often not taken, is the empire of habit. Habit is a chain which attaches us with subtle power to the past, whether that past be good or evil. It is linked on to the movements of the understanding, to the impulses of the affections, and especially to the action of the will. It is in alliance with circumstances, with persons, with all that acts upon memory and association, with particular places, with states of weather, with tones of voice, with features, with gestures, with everything that is apparently trifling and incidental. It was meant by our Creator to be a powerful support to the life of grace and virtue in the soul of man ; but, when the soul has been unchained by sin, habit is enlisted in the service of sin, and promotes a return to the grave of sin, even after the soul's resurrection through penitence to the life of grace. And do we not too often invite the ruinous reappearance of old habits by haunting the tombs from which we severally have risen, by playing with the appendages and with the apparatus of death, by visiting old haunts, by reading old books, by encouraging old imaginations that are fatally linked to the debasement of the past? 'How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' Truly we cannot dally with the ancient enemy; we cannot risk the reassertion of that power of habit of which we had broken the chain; we cannot forget that at our moral resurrection the whole power of habit was to be transferred to the account of the life of grace. The Christian, like Christ, being raised from the dead, was to die no more, and the spiritual death which sin involves was to have no more dominion over him. But,

III. Of the characteristics of our Lord's risen life one that immediately arrests attention is that the greater part of it was hidden from the eyes of men. During the forty days which elapsed between His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven He is recorded to have appeared altogether eleven times, and of these appearances five took place on the day of His rising from the grave. Generally speaking, too, these appearances were all of short duration. If we make the most of S. Luke's statement in the Acts of the Apostles that our Lord, after His Resurrection, was seen by the Apostles whom He had chosen forty days, this may, indeed, imply that there were more appearances than those that are on record, but it does not mean that our Lord was continuously with the Apostles, it does not destroy the intermittent character of His appearance; it marks only the period of time during which they took place. In this respect there is no doubt a contrast between our Lord's life before and after His death and Resurrection. Before those events it was, from the date of His entry on His ministry, lived, with rare exceptions, before the eyes of His disciples. Now and then, He set apart a night, or a few hours, for retirement, in which He might hold communion with the Father in prayer on some mountain top, or in some secluded spot near the scene of His ministry; but after the Resurrection this retirement was not the exception, it was the rule, and His appearances to His disciples were like so many suspensions of this rule. Now a Christian life which is planted in the likeness of Christ's Resurrection will be, to a great extent, withdrawn from the eyes of men. The unseen part of it will be larger than the seen; the part of which God takes account larger than that which can be measured by man. The Christian must indeed let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in heaven, but he must also take care that the motive of doing good to others is subordinate to that of doing what he does to the glory of God, since otherwise he has no reward of his Father which is in heaven. In any case the life of private prayer and self-discipline, the life of motive and intention, the life of faith, of hope, of love, of contrition, must in a true Christian's career altogether preponderate over his external activities; and, if it does, it will thereby promote those activities. The forest tree, ere it rears its branches to the sky, strikes its roots far and deep in the soil beneath; and an active Christian life which is not rooted in devotion to an unseen Master and Redeemer will speedily degenerate into the life, or rather the existence, of a philanthropic machine looking for its reward to imposing statistics, to florid newspaper reports, to the applause of public meetings, and, generally, to the praise of men. Publicity is the order of our day; it is a characteristic of life in this age on a scale to which, as I believe, there is no earlier parallel in human history. The distinctive triumphs of our modern civilisation tend to increase this publicity of life. The press, the railway, the telegraph, all conspire to oblige men to live before the eyes of their fellows. Everybody is observed, discussed, interviewed, photographed, so minutely, so persistently, that not merely monarchs and rulers in Church and State, but those of us who in bygone days would have lived and died in what was then accurately called a private station, are exhibited to the public view with such persistent eagerness, that a private station can scarcely still be said to exist. No doubt that publicity has its good side. It may supply motives for virtue and against wrong-doing, such as they are, in quarters where none others of a higher order are recognised; but who can doubt that it tends to impair, if not to destroy, all disinterestedness, that superiority to merely human approbation which is the very bloom and lustre of the higher Christian life; that it tends to make the world's standard of excellence the standard also of the service of Christ; that it leads men to grudge the time and the efforts of which no human eye can take account, and which were offered to 'Him that seeth in secret' by our fathers in the past; that, in short, it impairs that note of likeness of Christ in His Resurrection, which the Apostle would fain see in all His children—a life 'hidden with Christ in God.' It was the sense of this mood which was the strength of monasticism. Monasticism was a protest against the idea that the life of the risen Christ would be shared by men who had no eye for the value of much secret communion with God. Like other human efforts to give practical expression to a religious truth, monasticism made its full share of mistakes, but the truth which men like Benedict had in view remains for ever written in the text of the Gospel. A life lived wholly before the eyes of men, and lived, too probably, with a view to the approval of men, cannot be in the likeness of Christ's Resurrection.

And there was another note of our Lord's risen life which we may not fail to notice: when He did appear to His Apostles it was not casually or purposelessly. He had a distinct motive for each separate appearance. He had a lesson to teach, a warning, an encouragement, a grace, a blessing, to convey as the reason for each separate act of contact with the human beings around Him. Consider the accounts of His interviews with Mary Magdalene, with the holy women, with the disciples on the Emmaus road, with the eleven in the upper chamber, with the five hundred in Galilee, with the fishermen on the Sea of Tiberias,—nothing is conventional, nothing is perfunctory, nothing meaningless,—it were profane to add, nothing insincere. Each interview does a separate work which had to be done, and does it with a point and a thoroughness which we cannot mistake. This feature of our Saviour's risen life belongs indeed to His whole ministry, but the very occasional character of His appearance during the forty days gives it new prominence. And here must we not admit that we modern Christians are unlike Him? How very little of our intercourse with each other has a motive which raises it above a conventional, or even a selfish level? There are many reasons for this. Sometimes it is timidity, sometimes it is the absence of any strong and clear conviction of any kind as to the lines of truth and the lines of duty. Sometimes it is the more respectable dread of appearing to take too much on ourselves, the dread of being didactic or troublesome or pharisaical. But, as a consequence, our life too often resembles those story-books whose aim it is to excite continuous amusement in the reader, and yet not to have any discoverable moral whatever attached to them. We shrink from speaking the word in season, we shrink from giving a reason of the hope that is within us. Can we wholly escape responsibility for the consequences of our silence, for the downward career, for the darkened or the dying faith of those with whom we have been brought into contact? When our Lord met His Apostles after His Resurrection He spoke of things concerning the Kingdom of

God. He laid in those brief interviews the foundations on which were reared the universal Church, with its creed, with its constitution, with its settled methods of polity and working. ‘You may have forgotten an interview which we had’—so said a stranger to an older friend—‘you may have forgotten an interview twenty years ago; at the time I did not thank you for what you said; I was angry with you; I must tell you now that, under God, I owe you my soul.’

And, once more, our Lord’s risen life was passed in anticipation of the event which was to close it. That life of expectation did not last long. It was a short six weeks, and all was over. Read the account of the preparation for Elijah’s departure, the anxious, the affectionate misgivings with which the great prophet was followed by a band of young disciples who dreaded while they anticipated his removal from among them; but what withdrawal of friend or teacher could ever compare with that which took place on the Ascension? How tenderly our Lord breaks it to His disciples in His last discourse: ‘A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me, and because I go to the Father.’ When He once had risen, He was in full expectation of it—forgetting the sepulchre which was behind, and reaching forward to the mount of the ascension which was before Him. And so it should be with us. Here we have no continuing city; we seek one to come. We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen. The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal. We are strangers and pilgrims upon earth. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This I say, the time is short; it remains that they that have wives be as though they had none. The fashion of this world passeth away. All this is but an application in detail of the language of our Divine Master: ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.’ It is the language of men who sit easily to the present life, who look at it from many points of view, but as being, before all things, transitory, who fear to become entangled in its attractions, who are perpetually preparing and inducing others to prepare to leave it. It is the language of men who look to the future as becomes those who are planted in the likeness of the Resurrection of Christ.

It is in the triumphant sense of this risen life that we find one of the chief glories of Easter Day. On tomb after tomb in the crypt of St. Paul’s you will read the words: Here lieth the body of this great general, of that accomplished artist, of this distinguished man of letters, of that pious ecclesiastic—here lies his body; however celebrated he was in life, whatever art may have done for the beauty of his monument, or choiceness of language for the epitaph which it bears, still, here lies his body, and, till the last trump shall sound, no power can avail to raise him from the dust. But at the open tomb of Jesus there sits the angel with the spoken epitaph: 'He is not here, He is risen.' Earthly greatness, as a rule, ends with the grave: we may almost dare to say that the greatness of Jesus on earth begins with it. Why should it not be so with the life of the spirit? We have done, or should have done with the tomb of sin for good and all. We have to lead lives hidden with Christ in God, but manifested to the world as far as our duty to others may require. And we should be men of the future. Our eyes should look beyond the furthest horizons of time, be fixed on the outlines of the eternal hills. When this new life is planted in the soul, old things indeed have passed away, behold! all things have become new. As the spouse says in the Canticles: 'The winter is past, the time of the singing of the birds is come; arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.' Life melts into the world beyond the grave by a natural process, in which death is an incident rather than an anticipation, and the Christian's Easter on earth is but a rehearsal for the never-ending festival which they keep in heaven.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Resurrection as a Foundation Fact of the Gospel.

I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. I CORINTHIANS xv. 3, 4.

THE season, illuminated by the event, teaches us lessons of hope that 'we shall not all die.' Let us turn, then, to the thoughts naturally suggested by the day, and the great fact which it brings to each mind, and confirmed thereafter by the miracle that is being wrought round about us.

I. First, then, in my text, I would have you note the facts of S. Paul's gospel.

'First of all . . . I delivered' these things. And the 'first' not only points to the order of time in the proclamation, but to the order of importance as well. For these initial facts are the fundamental facts on which all that may follow thereafter is certainly built. Now the first thing that strikes me here is that, whatever else the system unfolded in the New Testament is, to begin with, it is a simple record of historical fact. It becomes a philosophy, it becomes a religious system; it is a revelation of God; it is an unveiling of man; it is a body of ethical precepts. It is morals and philosophy and religion all in one; but it is, first of all, a story of something that took place in the world.

If that be so, there is a lesson for men whose work it is to preach it. Let them never forget that their business is to insist upon the truth of these great, supernatural, all-important, and fundamental facts, the death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. They must evolve all the deep meanings that lie in them; and the deeper they dig for their meanings the better. They must open out the endless treasures of consolation and enforce the omnipotent motives of action which are wrapped up in the facts; but howsoever far they may carry their evolving and their application of them, they will neither be faithful to their Lord nor true stewards of their message unless, clear above all other aspects of their work, and underlying all other forms of their ministry, there be the unfaltering proclamation—'first of all,' midst of all, last of all—'how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,' and 'that He was raised again according to the Scriptures.'

'He died for our sins.' Now, if the Apostle had only said, 'He died for us,' that might conceivably have meant that, in a multitude of different ways, by example, appeal to our pity and compassion and the like, His death was of use to mankind. But when he says, 'He died for our sins,' I take leave to think that that expression has no meaning, unless it means that He died as the expiation and sacrifice for men's sins. I ask you, in what intelligible sense could Christ 'die for our sins' unless He died as bearing their punishment and as bearing it for us? And then, finally, 'He died and rose . . . according to the Scriptures,' fulfilling the Divine purposes revealed from of old.

II. Now look, in the second place, at what establishes the facts.

We have here, in this chapter, a statement very much older than our existing written Gospels. This epistle is one of the four letters of Paul which nobody that I know of—with quite insignificant exceptions in modern times—has ever ventured to dispute. It is admittedly the writing of the Apostle, written before the Gospels, and in all probability within five-and-twenty years of the date of the Crucifixion. And what do we find alleged by it as the state of things at its date? That the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was the subject of universal Christian teaching, and was accepted by all the Christian communities. Its evidence to that fact is undeniable; because there was in the early Christian Church a very formidable and large body of bitter antagonists of S. Paul's, who would have been only too glad to have convicted him, if they could, of any misrepresentation of usual notions, or divergence from the usual type of teaching. So we may take it as undeniable that the representation of this chapter is historically true; and that, within five-and-twenty years of the death of Jesus Christ, every Christian community and every Christian teacher believed in and proclaimed the fact of the Resurrection.

I do not need to dwell at all upon this other thought, that, unless the belief that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead originated at the time of His death, there would never have been a Church at all. Why was it that they did not tumble to pieces? Take the nave out of the wheel and what becomes of the spokes? A dead Christ could never have been the basis of a living Church. If He had not risen from the dead, the story of His disciples would have been the same as that which Gamaliel told the Sanhedrim was the story of all former pseudo-Messiahs, such as that man Theudas. 'He was slain, and as many as followed him were dispersed and came to naught.' Of course! The existence of the Church demands, as a pre-requisite, the initial belief in the Resurrection. I think, then, that the contemporaneousness of the evidence is sufficiently established.

III. And now I have no time to do more than touch the last thought. I have tried to show what establishes the facts. Let me remind you, in a sentence or two, what the facts establish.

Well, the first point to which I would refer, and on which I should like to enlarge, if I had time, is the bearing of Christ's Resurrection on the acceptance of the miraculous. We hear a great deal about the impossibility of miracle and the like. It upsets the certainty and fixedness of the order of things, and so forth and so forth. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead; and that opens a door wide enough to admit all the rest of the Gospel miracles. It is of no use paring down the supernatural in Christianity in order to meet the prejudices of a quasi-scientific scepticism, unless you are prepared to go the whole length, and give up the Resurrection. There is the turning point. The question is, Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, or do you not? If your objections to the supernatural are valid, then Christ is not risen from the dead; and you must face the consequences of that. If He is risen from the dead, then you must cease all your talk about the impossibility of miracle, and be willing to accept a supernatural revelation as God's way of making Himself known to man.

But, further, let me remind you of the bearing of the Resurrection upon Christ's work and claims. If He be lying in some forgotten grave, and if all that fair thought of His having burst the bands of death is a blunder, then there was nothing in His death that had the least bearing upon men's sin, and it is no more to me than the deaths of thousands in the past. But if He be risen from the dead, then the Resurrection casts back a light upon the Cross, and we understand that His death is the life of the world, and that 'by His stripes we are healed.' A. MACLAREN.

What the Sight of the Risen Christ makes Life and Death.

After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. I COR. XV. 6.

I. FIRST, we have to consider what life may become to those who see the risen Christ.

'The greater part remain until this present.' Now the word *remain* is no mere synonym for living or surviving. It not only tells us the fact that the survivors were living, but the kind of life that they did live. It is very significant that it is the same expression as our Lord used in the profound prophetic words, 'If I will that he *tarry* till I come, what is that to thee?' Now we are told in S. John's Gospel that 'that saying went abroad amongst the brethren,' and inasmuch as it was a matter of common notoriety in the early Church, it is by no means a violent supposition that it may be floating in S. Paul's memory here, and may determine his selection of this remarkable expression 'they remain,' or 'they tarry,' and they were tarrying till the Master came. So, then, I think if we give due weight to the significance of the phrase, we get two or three thoughts worth pondering.

1. One of them is that the sight of a risen Christ will make life calm and tranquil. Fancy one of these five hundred brethren, after that vision, going back to his quiet rural home in some little village amongst the hills of Galilee. How small and remote from him, and unworthy to ruffle or disturb the heart in which the memory of that vision was burning, would seem the things that otherwise would have been important and distracting! The faith which we have in the risen Christ ought to do the same thing for us, and will do it in the measure in which there shines clearly before that inward eye, which is our true means of apprehending Him, the vision which shone before the outward gaze of that company of wondering witnesses.

It is a good thing to cultivate the disposition that says about most of the trifles of this life, 'it does not much matter'; but the only way to prevent wholesome contempt of the world's trivialities from degenerating into supercilious indifference is, to base it upon Christ, discerned as near us and bestowing upon us the calmness of His risen life. Make Him your scale of importance, and nothing will be too small to demand and be worthy of the best efforts of your work, but nothing will be too great to sweep you away from the serenity of your faith.

2. Again, the vision of the risen Christ will also lead to patient persistence in duty. If we have Him before us, the distasteful duty which He sets us will not be distasteful, and the small tasks, in which great faithfulness may be manifested, will cease to be small.

3. And, again, the sight of the risen Christ leads to a life of calm expectancy. 'If I will that he *tarry* till I come' conveys that shade of meaning. The Apostle was to wait for the Lord from heaven, and that vision which was given to those five hundred men sent them home to their abodes to make all the rest of their lives one calm aspiration for, and patient expectation of, the return of the Lord.

II. So, secondly, consider what death becomes to those who have seen Christ risen from the dead.

'Some are fallen asleep.' Now that most natural and obvious metaphor for death is not only a Christian idea, but is found, as would be expected, in many tongues, but yet with a strange and significant difference. The Christian reason for calling death a sleep embraces a great deal more than the heathen reason for doing so, and in some respects is precisely the opposite of that, inasmuch as to most others who have used the word, death has been a sleep that knew no waking, whereas the very pith and centre of the Christian reason for employing the symbol is that it makes our waking sure. We have here what the act of dying, and what the condition of the dead become by virtue of faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. There lies in the thought the idea of repose. In that sleep there are folded around the sleepers the arms of the Christ on whose bosom they rest, as an infant does on its first and happiest home, its mother's breast.

2. But then, besides that, the emblem suggests the idea of continuous and conscious existence. A man asleep does not cease to be a man; a dead man does not cease to live.

3. And, finally, the emblem suggests the idea of waking. Sleep is a parenthesis. If the night comes, the morning comes. 'If winter comes, can spring be far behind?' They that sleep will awake, and be satisfied when they 'awake with Thy likeness.' And so these three things—repose, conscious continuous existence, and the certainty of awaking—all lie in that metaphor.

The calm, peaceful passage from life into what else is the great darkness is possible on condition of our having beheld the risen Lord. These witnesses of whom my text speaks, S. Paul would suggest to us, laid themselves quietly down to sleep, because before them there still hovered the memory of the vision which they had beheld. Faith in the risen Christ is the anchor of the soul in death, and there is nothing else by which we can hold then.

A. MACLAREN.

The Resurrection Indispensable to the Christian Faith.

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
1 Corinthians xv. 14.

THIS is the Apostle's way of saying, as strongly as he can, that there is no doubt whatever about the fact of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. He tells his readers that Christ is risen, because if He is not risen consequences must follow which he knows they will treat as plainly absurd. 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'

I. What are the leading features of the state of mind which Christian faith creates in the soul, and how are these likely to be affected by the denial of Christ's Resurrection from the dead? The most characteristic trait in the habitual thought of a believing Christian is the conviction, never absent from his consciousness altogether, often present with an ardent constraining power, that, although most utterly unworthy, he is a redeemed man—that, by the perfect obedience, the atoning Passion and death of Jesus Christ, and the graces and gifts which flow from it, he has been brought out of bondage to sin and death and placed in a new relation to God the Father—a relation of freedom and of sonship begun in this world and to be perfected hereafter. This consciousness of redemption, this buoyant, thankful, exultant sense of living beneath the smile of the author of our existence through the reconciliation which has been so generously effected by our Saviour, Christ, enters into all the recesses of the Christian soul. It regulates thought, it prompts to repentance, it requires prayer, it impels to action, it determines the course of feeling towards, and of intercourse with, others. It leaves no district of mental or moral action altogether unaffected by its pervading influence. S. Paul's words, 'He loved me and gave Himself up for me,' are emblazoned within the believing soul over each district, each avenue, of thought and feeling; and all its powers conspire again and again, though without articulate words, to sing the hymn of the redeemed, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'

But if Christ has not risen from His grave after all, where is the justification of all this? Is it not—we must say the word—is it not an illusion? How can a fellow-mortal, as little the final conqueror of sin and death as any man of us, be the author of this new life? How could a Christ who was laid in His grave to see corruption, and to mingle His body with the dust, be this—the august Redeemer of Christendom? Pay such a Christ what compliments you will on the score of this or that portion of His teaching which you happen to approve, or such and such a trait in His character which wins your admiration, still these your eulogies do not make Him the Lord of life and death, nor do they invest His death with an atoning power. Why was it that in dying He wrought out such vast, such unimaginable, blessings for our fallen race? Because His person gave to His death an infinite value. Each pang of His soul, each drop of His Blood, was charged with all the virtue of His Godhead; but in the sight of our eyes He seemed to die and His departure was taken for misery. And how was man to know that an event so exceptional in its character had taken place, that a superhuman person had been crucified? The Apostle explains that He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness'—or, as it had better be rendered, 'as regards His holy and higher nature'—'by the resurrection from the dead.' The Resurrection pours a flood of light upon the Passion. The Resurrection shows what it was that made Calvary the scene, not merely of a public execution, but of a world-redeeming sacrifice; and if Christ be not raised, then there is no proof that He who suffered on Calvary was more than the feeble victim of an enormous wrong, powerless, as His enemies said at the time, powerless to save Himself, and much more powerless to achieve the salvation of others. To quote S. Paul once more, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins.'

II. And a second ruling feature of a Christian's habitual state of mind is that he is constantly looking forward to another life. A Christian does not speculate on another life as a bare possibility; he takes it for granted as an ascertained fact. He looks forward to it as he looks forward to the changes of nature, to the setting of the sun, to the succession of the seasons. He knows that death will come to him as to everybody else, that each day of his life brings death nearer, that death means a momentous and an unimaginable change; but he knows something, too, of what will follow it. Christ our Lord has converted what was, before He came, at best but a splendid guess, into an absolute certainty. He has explored that unknown world, He has unveiled its terrors, He has enhanced its beauties, He has told all who will trust Him how to secure in it a blessed immortality; and therefore, as I have said, a Christian looks forward. He treats this life as a preface to that which will follow it. He gives it up, if need be, to secure the life beyond. He does not pretend to be particularly heroic, or other than a prudent man who acts upon the knowledge which has come in his way; but he looks forward to the time when mortality will be swallowed up of life, and meanwhile he rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. But suppose that Christ has not really risen from His grave, what then becomes of these bright anticipations? Is there any real warrant for them? There remain, you say, the words of Christ. Granted. What then is their authority? If Christ never rose from His grave, how do His words about the future life of man differ, for instance, from the words of Plato? They are more positive, no doubt, more explicit, but do they represent any sources of knowledge altogether distinct in kind from those which Plato had at his command? No, if Christ our Lord died and did not burst the fetters of death, if His dust in very deed still mingles with the soil of Palestine, then it is trifling with language, it is trifling with the hopes and with the anxieties of the soul of man, to tell us that He has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, or that He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. If He be indeed not risen, He has only added a few more positive assertions on the subject of immortality to the stock of speculations which mankind already possesses; but we do not really know more about immortality than we knew before He came. Unless Christ be risen, your faith in a future life, so far as it is based on any additions of His to our natural anticipations on the subject, is undoubtedly vain.

III. And a third feature of the state of mind created in the soul by Christian faith is belief in the possible perfection of man. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of this particular conviction. Our average experience of human character in ourselves, if not in others, is so disheartening that a strong faith in man's capacity for perfection is a necessary ingredient of all earnest moral effort; and this is afforded us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever must be said of mankind in general—whatever abatements must be made from the character even of those who have lived lives the highest and the nearest to God—one life we Christians know there has been which has been unstained by any taint of sin, one absolutely true and unclouded intellect, one heart whose affections were perfectly pure, one will of which the rectitude and the vigour were never for an instant impaired. He could challenge a jealous world to convict Him of sin if it could. He could dare to say of His own actions, 'I do always such things as please the Father.' In the judgment of those who watched Him most closely He 'did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.' And, indeed, 'such a high priest as this became us—holy, harmless, undefiled, as He is separate from sinners.'

We needed Him as our priestly representative in the heavens. We needed Him no less as our standard of inimitable excellence on earth. But if Christ be not risen, is He still a perfect character? If the event to which He solemnly referred as the ratification of His mission never occurred at all, can He be acquitted, I will not say of levity, but of trifling with the confidence and the hopes of His followers? If Christ be not risen, you may still save something, perchance, out of the wreck of His character—(I will not discuss so painful and, for a Christian, so intolerable an enterprise)—but your faith in His perfection must perish irretrievably. It is also vain.

IV. A last characteristic of the state of mind produced by Christian faith is confidence in the ultimate victory of good over evil. Here, again, is a truth over which much in the world at large—much in the lives of individual men—may well cast a shadow. 'The righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart.' 'The ungodly are in no peril of death. They are lusty and strong. They come unto no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men.' This is the appearance which human life wears from age to age. Here and there we see notorious exceptions to the rule, but upon the whole evil would seem to be in possession and, as far as experience goes, to be likely to hold its own. When a Christian is haunted by this impression, which strikes at persistent faith in the moral supremacy of God, he turns his thoughts instinctively to his Saviour's Resurrection. Never did evil attain such a triumph over pure goodness as when it nailed Jesus Christ, our Lord, to the cross of shame. Never was the ultimate victory of goodness so clearly vindicated as on the morning when Jesus rose from the grave. Of this supreme event in the annals of the world, Joseph's exaltation to be the ruler of Egypt, or David's triumph over Saul, or Israel's deliverance in one age from the Egyptian bondage, in another from the fetters of Babylon, were but faint adumbrations. The greatest proof that ever was given that the world is ruled by a moral God was given when Jesus, the sinless victim of triumphant evil, was rescued by the Resurrection from the clutches of death. But if Christ be not raised, what then? Then it must be admitted that the greatest of all injustices on record has never been redressed; that God has given us no visible pledge that they ever will be redressed. Then it must be owned that the claims of evil and darkness to rule the world are not, cannot really be, shaken by the words of a dead Christ; that all which 'Christianity'—so to call the tenets of any who, while denying a risen Saviour, yet care for the name—all that Christianity has to offer is fair words, precarious hopes, but no new facts whatever—no new facts to enable the sinking heart of man to maintain its struggle with predominant evil. If Christ be not risen, your faith in the ultimate victory of good is, so far as it rests on what He experienced, only too surely vain.

The foundation of the faith of Christians is, when you probe it, a solemn reality. At the empty tomb of Jesus Faith plants her foot firmly on the soil of earth, and then presently she raises her head to the heights of heaven. If Christ have indeed risen, then the redemption on Calvary, then the life beyond the grave, then the unassailable sanctity of the perfect man, then the coming triumph of goodness over evil, are indisputable, are certain. If Christ be risen indeed, then neither is the apostolic teaching vain, nor is the faith of Christians vain; and therefore to the end of time the apostolic message will sway successive generations of men with a conviction of its truth and power, and the faith of Christians will be, as it has been, the strength and the consolation of millions as they pass through this world to that life which is beyond the grave. H. P. LIDDON.

The Resurrection.

If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. I COR. XV. 17, 18.

I. NOTHING can be plainer than the account which the Scriptures give us of the mode by which the happiness of a future state, 'the gate of everlasting life,' is open to believers; nothing, that is, can be plainer with respect to the fact, although the reasons may be for ever hidden from our eyes. Our pardon and acceptance with God, our justification, our restoration to spiritual life, and consequently our resurrection, depended upon the Resurrection of Christ. If that has taken place, then the promise of God's written word standeth sure; if Christ be raised, then 'He is the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' If Christ is risen from the dead, then 'He is become the firstfruits of them that slept.' The whole hope of our salvation turns, therefore, upon the fact of our blessed Lord's Resurrection. Not that His Resurrection is to be treated as an isolated fact, since in itself, and in its bearing upon eternal life, it is indissolubly united with His Passion upon the Cross. These two events are developed in Scripture as the joint means of our salvation, and therefore they can neither of them be properly discussed asunder. The sacrifice upon the Cross then received its full accomplishment, its complete ratification, when God raised Him from the dead. 'He was delivered for our offences, and He was raised for our justification.' To suffer for our sins, to be the vicarious sacrifice in our stead, was our Saviour's office in His Crucifixion. To prove those sufferings to be effectual, that substitution of Himself to be accepted by His Father, to justify us before God, was the effect of the Resurrection.

II. If there is any one fact in the history of mankind which stands upon evidence unshaken and unassailable, it is that of the Resurrection of our blessed Lord. He was dead even by the confession of His murderers. He lay part of three days in the sepulchre, the entrance of which was sealed and watched by a guard of His enemies, for the express purpose of frustrating the fulfilment of His prophecy. These very guards became unwilling witnesses of the fact. 'And behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.' The news of His Resurrection was gradually spread amongst His wondering disciples. They were none of them inclined by prejudice to believe, many of them not easily convinced, all of them entirely downcast, since the event which had withered their hopes, 'that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.' Between the Resurrection and our Lord's final disappearance from earth, when He ascended into heaven, the space of forty days was allowed to intervene, in order that there might be no doubt of His being that 'same Jesus' who had been crucified. There was present amongst the witnesses, not a mere appearance, not a mere delusion, not a mere spirit, not a mere emblem of the immortality of the soul, but a real, substantial, tangible being, a sensible proof and instance of the resurrection of the body to a second life, a glorified body indeed, but still exhibiting the marks of those sufferings, which robbed the first terrestrial body of its life. 'Behold,' said the revived Redeemer, 'behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have'; and again, 'He saith to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.' 'He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve, and after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remained' when that Scripture was written, 'but some had fallen asleep.' To these witnesses, therefore, 'chosen before of God,' 'He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days,' 'who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.'

The Resurrection of Christ, then, has taken place, and our resurrection will follow as a necessary consequence. But, shall we rise to happiness or to misery? Shall we be of the number of those, over whom the second death shall have no power; or, shall our future life be a living death, an undying worm, and 'a fire which is not quenched'? It is written, 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' In the one or in the other of these classes we shall be found, and the alternative is a matter subjected to our own choice. Everlasting life through Jesus Christ is offered without distinction to us all; but not without conditions; and those conditions are faith and obedience.

R. W. JELF.

The Christian's Life in Christ.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. I Cor. xv. 2.

I. CAN there be more than this? There can. The text unfolds to us a deep mystery. 'In Christ shall all be made alive.' The endless Life which they shall live who are counted worthy of it, shall not be a life such as men seem to live here where our true life is unseen, as if we were so many creatures of God's hands, each having his existence wholly separate from his fellows, upheld in being by God, yet, as it seems, apart from God, having his own wills, affections, tastes, pursuits, passions, love, hatred, interests, joys, and sufferings. Our life then shall not be, as it seems here, and as it truly is in the ungodly, separate from God, and in the good indistinctly and imperfectly united with Him. It shall be a life 'in God.' 'In Christ shall all be made alive.' We shall live then, not only as having our souls restored to our bodies, and souls and bodies living on in the presence of the Almighty God. Great and unutterable as was this blessedness, there is a higher yet in store, to live on 'in Christ.' For this implies Christ's living on in us. These two are spoken of together in Holy Scripture. 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,' and, 'He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him'; and in the service for the Holy Communion, we pray that 'we may so eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood, that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.' For we can only dwell in God by His dwelling in us. To dwell in God is not to dwell on God only. It is no mere lifting up of our affection to Him, no being enwrapt in the contemplation of Him, no going forth of ourselves to cleave to Him. All this is our seeking Him, not His taking us up; our stretching after Him, not our attaining Him; our knocking, not His opening. To dwell in God, must be by His dwelling in us. He takes us out of our state of nature, in which we were, fallen, estranged, in a far country, out of and away from Him, and takes us up into Himself. He cometh to us, and if we will receive Him, He dwelleth in us, and maketh His abode in us. He enlargeth our hearts by His sanctifying Spirit which He giveth us, by the obedience which he enables us to yield, by the acts of faith and love which He strengthens us to do, and then dwelleth in those who are His more largely. By dwelling in us, He makes us parts of Himself, so that in the ancient Church they could boldly say, 'He deifieth me'; that is, He makes me part of Him, of His Body, who is God.

II. This is the great present fruit of the great mystery of godliness, 'God manifest in the Flesh,' that He, by sanctifying our flesh, might fit for His in-dwelling all who would receive Him; might come secretly to us, to be hereafter in us manifested for ever. It was a commencement, a practising, as it were, of what was to be for ever. God the Word dwelt in that holy human nature which He took, that henceforward He might, by a real in-dwelling (a real spiritual union, although not a personal union like that with the Man Christ Jesus), sanctify our nature, and knit it on, in Himself, to God for ever.

The everlasting Son, for our redemption, took our flesh, to be one of us; He came in our flesh; He cometh by His Spirit, really and truly, to dwell in us. He dwelleth, not as He doth in the material heavens, nor as He sanctifieth this house of God, nor as He did in the tabernacle, but united with the soul, and, in substance, dwelling in her, as He did personally in the Man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' In Him the Incarnate Word dwelt, becoming One with His holy manhood, 'by unity of person,' by taking it to Himself. In His saints He dwelleth partially, by the gift of His Spirit, in different degrees, according to their measure; but still His union with them is a shadow of that ineffable union of the ever-blessed Trinity, of the mode in which He dwelt in our ever-blessed Redeemer. For so our Lord Himself prayeth for them, 'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.' And this He bestowed upon them by Himself dwelling in them.

III. The Resurrection of our Lord is not only a pledge of our own; it is our own, if we be His. His Body is a pattern of what is in store for ours, since we, if His, are a part of it. And so when we read in the holy Gospels the history of His appearances after His Resurrection, we may see in them, not only so many proofs of His Resurrection, but so many manifestations of our future glory. As His, after His Resurrection, was a Spiritual Body, not subject to any of the laws of our bodies, but passing through the closed doors; now present, then vanishing; so glorious in majesty that His very

Apostles cry out, 'It is a spirit'; not recognised by them at first, but known rather by His wonted actions, 'the breaking of bread,' or by His miracles, than in itself; awful to flesh and blood; such shall ours be.

Seek we Him in His sacraments, by receiving that life-giving bread which is His Flesh, for the life of the world; in His house, by penitent, lowly worship; in His poor, by ministering to them; in His sick, by visiting them; in His little ones, by receiving them in His name, and fencing them in His fold, and teaching them to love Him. Seek we Him in our thoughts, words, and actions. So in all things seeking Him, shall we, at length, find Him, and ourselves be found in Him; yea, He, who shall manifest Himself more fully then, shall, according to His most true promise, in earnest thereof while hidden from the world, manifest Himself to them who are also hidden from the world in Him. E. B. PUSEY.

Identity and Variety.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory. 1 COR. XV. 41.

THIS is, as you will remember, part of S. Paul's great argument for immortality. The reasoning is quite clear. He speaks of the splendour of heavenly things. He has been caught up into the third heaven, and he sees the glory of the everlasting life. The way in which he comes to the particular words of my text is this. He has been claiming man's resurrection on the strength of Christ's resurrection. Christ has risen and entered into His glory; man, because he is one in human nature with Christ, must rise. 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.' Then what sore misgivings come. Can man's life undergo a change like that and yet be truly his? Must he not be another being to enter on such a different condition? If he remains the same being, must he not ever have the same experiences which are bound up with his very nature? Are real identity and such a change and variety compatible with one another? Observe how S. Paul answers the question. First, he gives the parable of the seed: 'And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.' The vital principle is too spiritual to be confined to one form; it passes from one form into another, which is wholly different and yet remains essentially the same. The buried seed and the wheat waving in the sunshine are the same, and yet how different they are! Then he passes to a yet more brilliant illustration. There is a power of life which pervades the universe; everywhere it is identical, everywhere it is glorious; it shines in everything; by it sun, moon, and stars are clothed with radiance, yet how different is the splendour it gives to each! 'There is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.' The same life, keeping itself the same through every change, yet changing so completely; keeping itself the same human life, and yet able to go up to heaven and stand in the life of God. That is S. Paul's argument. But it is not the way in which the argument bears upon human immortality that I wish to speak about this evening, though to that we will return at last. It is rather of the whole idea of identity and variety co-existing and ministering to each other; the interest and beauty which that idea gives to the world we live in.

I. And notice first how S. Paul bases the argument for immortality upon the richness and splendour of this mortal life. Because this world is so great and beautiful, therefore there must be another greater and still more beautiful. Often enough have men made heaven a compensation for the woes of earth; often enough have men said that because this world is so full of wretchedness, therefore there must be another world where the starvelings are fed, where the wounded are healed, where the frozen souls are warmed. S. Paul makes heaven not a compensation, but a development. Because this earth is so glorious, therefore the glory of heaven must be surpassing and unspeakable. How much nobler is S. Paul's way, how much fuller of the inspiration of faith! How much greater, when it is lost in the higher life, will it make this life for any man who believes it! For he who finds the manifold glories of this mortal life to be the symbols and tokens of a glorious immortality, will always be led to live this life as intensely and profoundly as he can, in order that the higher life may become real and attractive to him. Men have sought to separate earth from heaven. S. Paul says emphatically, No. He says, the deeper you go into life, the more life must get itself out around and become eternal. Live lightly, superficially, formally, think little and make little of life, and life will be little to you; think much and make much of life, and it will assert its greatness and prophesy its continuance. His doctrine seems to teach that immortality is not a truth to be distinctly striven for as an end, but a truth which will hold itself around the man who deeply reaches the meaning of life, the man who realises living, how identity and variety blend and unite to make the richness and solemnity of living. Identity and variety, sameness and difference; as we see them bound together, we feel how they express the tone and feeling which the thought of life demands. Identity, sound, solid, and substantial; it means the steady, continuous, unchanging quality of things. It almost suggests monotony. It is dimly haunted with misgivings and fears of dulness. On the other hand, variety is vital: it quivers with the constant expectation of change; it is full of the interest of novelty; it sparkles and rustles, and is sensitive and open to all influences. If it has a danger, it is not that of dulness, but of restlessness; not of heaviness, but of lightness. To quicken identity with variety, to steady variety with identity, is to make a man always keep himself and yet always feel the power of new conditions around him. And thus, though you may not have made the best of your past life, you have preserved at once responsibility and hope; you have got both stability and movement, a rock on which to build and a wind of living inspiration. Think of the best men you have known in life, and you will find in them these qualities in their highest union. They have been men whom you have always felt to be themselves in everything, and yet men who felt the largeness and richness of life, and have known how to change from condition to condition. In the union of these qualities lay their whole strength.

II. The knowledge of the truth will produce self-respect. Here are you, seemingly insignificant, not making much of yourself, not seeming to be worthy of being made much of. Oh, if you can only know two things—first, that you are a different creature from any that the world has ever seen since Adam; and, secondly, that you are a branch of the tree of life from which sprang Isaiah and S. John—there must come self-respect from both these truths when they are really wrought and kneaded into the substance of the human nature. It is some glimpse of this that makes the schoolboy who has been idle at his desk gather up his books and set to work. It is some glimpse of this in the poor, dark soul that gives the slave the power to look into the face of his master who is flogging him, and to keep his soul untamed, unbeaten. It is the certainty of these two truths that makes it easy for the labourer who digs your ditch not to be bullied by your arrogant wealth, but to do his task perfectly and look up to God, who really gave it him to do. Every act has its own glory, its perfect, entire way of being done. To do any act in its perfect way is a perfect act. The star is not a little sun, it is a star; it is not a fragment broken off from the great orb and shining in a broken fragmentary lustre; it is a thing by itself; it was made for itself; it has its own purpose, its own way of shining which the sun itself cannot envy. 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.' To shine out softly in the heavens is to do a new and distinct thing, which makes the heavens more radiant. I would I could make this clear to some disturbed and discontented soul here this evening. You are a star, not a sun. God forbid, if you are really a sun and not a star, that any compulsion of your fellow-men should keep you in the star's place, and shut you out of the sun's. We must labour everywhere until there is perfect liberty throughout the world for every nature to know and feel itself, and at its highest work. But you do know yourself; you are a star and not a sun; your place in life is not in the forefront of things; it is subordinate, secondary. What then? Can you not learn this, that if you do your work with perfect faithfulness, with as absolute a perfectness as it is capable of being done with, you are making just as genuine a contribution to the substance of the universal good as is the most brilliant worker that the world contains; you are setting as true a fact between the eternities as he is; you are doing what he cannot do, and he is doing what you cannot do. It is the fable of the mountain and the squirrel, 'If I cannot carry a forest on my back neither can you crack a nut.' 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.' There is the ground of self-respect. Oh, go take up your work and do it with faithfulness; so shall you shine with a glory which is all your own, a glory which the great heaven of universal life would be the poorer for missing.

Then see how inevitably respect for others is bound up in such self-respect as this. Let me know God, and then I rejoice in all that man does everywhere upon earth. Then, O poet, sing your song; O sculptor, carve your statue; O builder, build your house; O engineer, rule out your railroad on the plain; O sailor, sail your ship across the sea; they are all mine; I am glad, I am proud of them all. Is it not what S. Paul wrote, 'All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Then, that everything should reach its best, that every man should do his best in his own place, in his own line; that every star should shine brightly in its own sphere, comes to be the wish and prayer and purpose of my life. Here is the only self-respect, the only true real respect for our fellow-men.

And if this truth may be applied to the different conditions and degrees in which we see different men spending their lives, it may also apply to the different degrees and conditions in which we may think of our own lives as passing. You and I are this to-day; to-morrow or the next year we may be something quite different. To-day we may be insignificant, to-morrow or the next year we may be illustrious and prominent; or to-day we may be illustrious and prominent, and to-morrow or the next year we may be insignificant. How shall we look upon these endless possibilities of change, this uncertainty of human life? Is it not to look upon each condition as a distinct thing, with its own values and meaning, and yet to feel how our human life may still be the same, though it is now spreading itself out and comes to larger things? This harmonises everything. Let a student honour his studentship, let him live in it thoroughly and honourably; let him think of it not merely as a road over which he is compelled to travel, but a dwelling in which he has the privilege of living. But let him realise his studentship so truly that whatever else he may be capable of doing in the coming years may not seem to him strange and unnatural. He who so lives in the present lives a life which the larger hopes of the future do not disturb but deepen.

So I say at the end as at the beginning, to S. Paul this truth was a proof of immortality. He would have men live upon earth, yet conscious of their capacity for heaven; he would have earth clear, sharp, distinct, definite, shown in its own colour, held in its own grasp; yet he would have man so conscious of his larger life, and willing to go on, the very definiteness of what he is to-day making real to him the greater things that he will do in the vastly mysterious world beyond. Is not that what we want: the life of earth now, the life of heaven by-and-by, each clear with its own glory, and our humanity capable of them both, capable of sharp timely duty here and now, capable also of the supernal transcendental splendour of the invisible world when the time shall come; the glory of the star first, the glory of the sun at last! We must not lose either of them in the other. We must not be so full of hope of the future that we cannot do our daily work here upon the road. We must not be so lost in the dull work on the earth that we shall not be perpetually inspired by the hope of heaven. God grant that all the contentment and the hope which come together do not destroy each other, but deepen each other when they come, to those who live in Him, who covers all, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, with Himself.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Victory over Death.

Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 CORINTHIANS XV. 54.

IT is a hard thing to get the heart high enough to sing this song. Death is such a terrible living reality to us now. The sense that he is so near—ready to come in at any moment upon any one we may most dearly love—and that, if he comes, he comes with a force which no power on earth can resist; the fact that he has so come in all his iron sternness; and then the long, long time that he holds his own; and the thought that we have, every one of us, to pass through it; and the horror of what may be in that untrodden passage—in the face of all these facts it is very difficult to call death victory.

While the battle is raging in the heat of the day, it is no easy thing to be calm enough, and to be confident enough to rehearse the evening song of triumph; and yet this is exactly what our duty is, to be standing out in faith upon the other side, and to be looking back upon death as a dead thing, and on the great conqueror of all, conquered and laid low!

No doubt S. Paul was helped to it by that being 'in deaths oft' of which he spoke, and by his own moral daily dying. Our Easters come round to help us; and the more we can picture to ourselves the rising of the Lord Jesus, and the more we ourselves know the power of an inward death to sin, and a constant resurrection to newness of life, the better we shall be able to antedate the joy of that moment when, in the reunion of all we love, and waking up to the presence and the perfect image of God, we shall lift up our voices, and cry, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

I. The expression is a very strong one. You will observe that it does not say, 'Death shall be exchanged for victory,' but the element of the death goes to make the substance of the victory; it is the absorption of the one which goes to form the very strength and being of the other. 'Death is swallowed up in,' or rather 'into,'—'Death is swallowed up into victory.'

And this is in strict accordance with God's general method. Spring must come out of winter; and there is no true happiness in the world till there has first been sadness. The sorrow is never taken away, but turned into joy. And so, in like manner, heaven would be a far less thing if we did not get to it by sorrow. The death is essential to the glory. 'Death is drunk into,' that is the exact meaning of the original word—'Death is drunk into victory.'

It was clearly thus in the case of our Lord. The empty grave, the broken seal, the stone removed, the body free, the whole energies restored, showed plainly victory. But this was not all. It is evident that by some mysterious process, which we cannot trace, death turned to our Saviour's gain. He had greater liberty; the spirit more ruled the flesh; He was less subject to material laws; He was greater and more heavenly after His Resurrection. So that we may say that even to Christ it was a good thing to die; the grave helped His joys, and the 'death was swallowed up into the victory.'

And so it is with us.

II. But let us understand accurately what that solemn word death means.

In whatever relation you take it, it always embodies one idea—separation. There is natural death; it is the separation of the body from the soul, and of both from those we love. There is moral death; it is the separation of the soul from God. There is eternal death; it is the separation of the creature for ever from the light and the presence of its Creator. But in the wonderful method of God's grace, each of these deaths goes to make its own proper victory. The soul goes away for a while from the body, only that it may fit it again the more perfectly, without the jar and the clashings which here so mar the union. The alienation from God, when death has once laid its hand upon us, turns to a friendship and an intimacy which unfallen man never knew. And the infinite distance which sin rolled in from all eternity between us and a holy God, only measures and enhances the covenant which has bridged the gulf to make the two worlds one.

And in each instance, the process by which the conquest was achieved was that in very deed, or by imputation, Christ Himself 'drank death.' Therefore it was that His spirit passed away from the tabernacle frame with that 'loud cry.' Therefore it was that He parted, not without bitter anguish, from those in whom His soul delighted. Therefore it was He knew, through the power of the sin which He was carrying for us, what is the felt darkness of those far-off places where souls walk their dreary way, forsaken of God. And therefore it was that, with a literalness which we believe more than we can utter, 'He went down into hell.'

So Christ exhausted death. All death, of every kind, gathered itself into one; and it was poured into the cup, and Christ drained it to the dregs.

III. If you can only believe, there is no death for you in the whole world. In all its dark forms death is gone, gone as the darkness which melts into the morning light, gone as the early haze turns to the noon-tide heat, merged into life—such life as they know not who know not death, true life, the life which is the present life of the Lord Jesus, the life of the living ones in paradise, the only life worth the living, the life that springs from death.

Rise then, rise this Easter morning to the level of your high privileges! 'With His own right hand, and with His holy arm, hath He gotten to Himself the victory!'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Death swallowed up in Victory.

Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 CORINTHIANS XV. 54.

'THE living race of the children of Adam pass away,' said the old Greek writer, 'like the leaves of autumn'; 'they are cut down,' says the Psalmist, 'dried up, and withered, like the flowers of the field.' Yet even the prophet whom he quotes sees a day when the Lord God shall destroy the veil which is over all mankind, and shall wipe away the tears from off all faces. So the final victory, cries the Apostle, rests with the side which from time immemorial seemed and often counted itself so wholly worsted, and his human heart seems to beat faster, and his voice to rise to fuller and more tremendous tones. 'O death,' he cries, 'where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

I. It is surely the most momentous of conflicts. Who is there among us but knows the power of that great adversary? It has been brought home to us, in our own circles, in darkened homes or clouded lives. We have realised it each in turn as time does, as we say, its slow and sure work, as parents or teachers, or friends or companions, or fellow-workers are removed, as the old familiar faces which shine upon us through the mist of years are laid to their last sleep and disappear. Or we have felt it in a larger circle, as a community, as a nation. We may feel that we need more and more to open our hearts to the full teaching that this Easter brings us, to the value and significance of the victory won for us by Him whose rising from the dead we commemorate to-day. It is a world-old and a world-wide conflict of which my text speaks. Everywhere in the records of the past, from ancient pyramid to village church, this historic choir and walls, everywhere in the range of land and sea and rock and river bed, we see tokens of the triumph of death over all the manifold forms of life. The trophies of death seem everywhere, and mankind has again and again bowed before the universal conqueror; and yet, for all that, from time to time the human heart has in all ages striven and rebelled against the sense of sad defeat, and tried to give some clear shape and articulate form to the unconquerable cravings of the instinct which stirs within it. 'Is,' men have asked, 'this life—so short, so frail—all the life which is granted us? This craving for what seems good and noble and true, these vague touches and snatches and some sense of the infinite that come to us, or, it may be, these purer and unsatisfied affections, these yearnings for more perfect goodness—are these all a mere fancy of the human brain, but a mere product of the slow action of inherited dreams or misleading teaching? Or, worse yet, is the good cause lost here, lost for ever? Is all that speaks to us of eternal righteousness and infinite tenderness and mercy, of a world where wrongs shall be redressed and tears dried—is all this a mere idle fancy? Or is it true, worst of all, that the higher man mounts in his hopes and aspirations the further he wanders from the grim truth, the more he plunges into a region of dreams from which a truer instinct has preserved the beasts that range the forest and the birds that cleave the air? Or is death, not life, the true lord of the universe?' And so, age after age, outside the circle of light that Christ's Gospel brings, the human heart has swayed to and fro, listening by turns to two voices, one bidding it resign itself and die, the other 'Hope on and live.' And it has faltered, hesitated, hoped, doubted, believed, disbelieved, but has never bowed in full and entire acquiescence to the yoke of death.

II. And let us turn now from this inward conflict to the sure hope which the Apostle brings so confidently to the aid of those who on Easter morning stand near graves long sacred, or stand in thought by graves perhaps not yet closed. He does not, in the message that he brings, speak to us as others have spoken before him and since; he does not bid us look for some indestructible germ in the human organism which death cannot touch. Of this he says little or nothing. It lies outside his teaching. He points, indeed—he points the devout to some of the lessons of nature—to the stage of decay and seeming death which is the condition of the fruitful life of grain or seed. 'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' And he reminds us also of the infinite richness and variety of even this visible universe. 'There is one frame-work,' he says, 'for the life of man, another for the life of beasts.' So again, 'One star differs from another star in glory.' It is as though he would say to the timid and faltering questioner, 'God, who clothes the grass of the field with such varied beauty, can He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? can He in this boundless universe find no form, no outward condition, in which your higher life can renew itself elsewhere, no body other than that which the laws of nature will reduce to their natural constituents and elements?' 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' And, again, he points to the law of order and progress. That which is spiritual, the higher life, comes not first but last in order; howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. As we have worn the image of the earthly, so shall we wear the image of the heavenly. But this heavenly, this higher nature is—as he speaks of it elsewhere—the gift of God through Jesus Christ. It is a quickening, a fertilising power coming from Him, that is to renew our whole being, recreate by its action all our spiritual nature, glorifying, endowing us with what is incorruptible, and so swallow up death in victory. And, even as he speaks, he seems to rise to heights to which we hardly dare to follow him. He speaks, or seems to speak, of a day when the risen Christ shall have subdued all things unto Himself, when His great work shall be done and consummated, and all His enemies, all evil, all death, placed beneath His feet, and the glory of the conquering Christ absorbed and swallowed up in the glory of the Father.

And, as he breathes into our ears these high and inspiring and mysterious hopes, we feel that he who speaks is moving in no atmosphere of wavering faith or mere struggling aspirations. 'Christ is risen' is the key-note of all that meets our ear. In and through Him, we who cling to Him, we who will strive humbly to follow Him, to do His will and live in His spirit, through Him who is our life, we too shall live with Him. 'Because I live,' He said Himself, 'ye shall live also.'

III. And His rising, and the rising again of His followers stand or fall, in the Apostle's view, together. 'If He be not risen, we, one and all,' he says, 'are most miserable'; the very basis and foundation, not of our hope only, but of all our Master's teaching, he reminds us, is gone and shattered. Those blessings on the poor, the sorrowful, the meek, the despised, the mourners who have been trained and disciplined by life's sorrows for a higher and a larger life, seem worthless; and the Apostle emphasises this. 'If Christ be not risen,' he says, 'we are yet in our sins.' If this world only, with all its failures, and all its injustices, is our only sphere of action and of hope; if God is not the God of the living, but of the dead; if generation after generation of souls have vainly trusted in Him; if no true and single-minded and faithful worker, whether among the leaders of our race or the simplest and lowliest of God's servants, may whisper

'God hath some greater work to do,
For one so faithful and so true—'

if so, we, who believed and trusted, are of all men, St. Paul would tell us, most miserable. And we can surely enter into his words, roll back that stone upon the grave that held Him, wipe out our Easter hopes, and each returning spring will bring to mourning hearts darker clouds than those which beneath our northern skies shut out the longed-for sunlight. The insensible earth will renew herself in gladness; the unchanging laws of nature will work on in their undeviating course; but if the lessons of Easter are to us an unmeaning sound, our life can know no spring, the just and the unjust are to lie down together, and the same God, or the same unheeding nature, turns a cold eye on the sinless and the sinful. Of all men, the Apostle said, we are in such case the most miserable.

But how soon he turns aside from that gloomy thought! Death, he says in the words of the old prophet, 'shall be swallowed up of victory.' 'Thanks be to God,' he cries, 'who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' DEAN BRADLEY.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection.

That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection. PHIL. iii. 10.

'THE power of Christ's Resurrection!' Here is one of those phrases which is only understood when we remember that it is in tacit contrast with another phrase which suggests it: power seems here to be in contrast with fact. In every occurrence, great or unimportant, there are to be considered, first, the fact, that which actually occurred, and, secondly, the consequences, actual or possible, —what S. Paul calls 'the power' of the fact. We know the fact of an occurrence when we have handled the proofs which show that it really took place, when we have mastered its scene, its mechanism, its dimensions; but we know the power of the fact or occurrence when we can trace what its effects have been, or might be, whether in the world at large, or upon individuals, whether upon others or upon ourselves.

I. The power of Christ's Resurrection may be observed, first of all, and generally, in the way in which a true belief in it enables us to realise habitually the moral government of the world by God.

There are circumstances, no doubt, in the modern world which make belief in the divine government harder that it was for our ancestors. Now here the certainty that Jesus Christ rose from the dead asserts what S. Paul calls its power. For when Jesus Christ was crucified, it might have seemed—it did seem—that the sun of God's justice had gone down behind thick clouds, and that a moral darkness, of which that in the sky was but a shadow, had settled upon the earth; it might have seemed that while all the vices were being feasted and crowned in Rome, all the virtues could be crucified, and crucified with impunity, in Jerusalem; it might have seemed that we lived in a world in which nothing was more surely at a discount than moral beauty, nothing more certain in the future than physical and brute force. But when He burst forth from the grave in which they laid Him under seal and stone, He proclaimed to men's senses, as well as to their consciences, that the law which rules the world is moral and not material law, and that the sun of God's righteousness, if it is at times over-clouded in human history, is sure to reappear. To know that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, is to know that, whatever may be the perplexities of the moment or of the age, the world is really governed by God’s most holy and overruling providence.

II. And, next, the power of the Resurrection of Christ is seen in the firm persuasion which it should create in our own days, as in the days of the Apostle, that the Christian creed is true—true as a whole, true in its several constituted parts. And thus the Resurrection of Christ has a twofold aspect: it is at once a truth of the Christian creed, and it is a proof that the Christian creed is true. There are many truths of Christianity which do not contribute anything to prove its general truth, although they could not be lost sight of without fatally impairing its integrity. Take, for example, the truth of our Lord’s perpetual intercession in heaven. Nothing tells more powerfully upon the life and conscience of a believing Christian than the knowledge that his loving but unseen Saviour is ever engaged in one ceaseless act of self-oblation on high, on behalf of His members and servants here on earth: on behalf of all and each of them, ‘He ever liveth to make intercession for us.’ But this truth does not attest the truth of any other portion of the creed, although it is, if we may say so, the inevitable complement of other truths. We believe in our Lord’s intercession, because His Apostles have so taught us; we do not believe the creed as a whole, because we believe in Christ’s intercession. It is otherwise with the Resurrection, which is, as I have said, not only an article of the Christian faith, but a proof that the Christian faith is true. It is this because it is the certificate of our Lord’s mission from heaven, to which He Himself pointed as a warrant of His claim. He laid this stress upon His coming Resurrection upon two occasions especially, in His saying about the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple, and in His saying about the sign of the prophet Jonas. The Resurrection was constantly before His mind, and it was so because it was to be the warrant of His mission; and when He did rise, He redeemed the pledge which He had given to the disciples and to the world. The first preachers of Christianity, at any rate, understood this. The Resurrection was the proof to which they constantly pointed that our Lord was what He claimed to be. ‘Jesus and the Resurrection’ was the popular name at Athens for the Gospel as it was taught by S. Paul. ‘This Jesus, whom ye have crucified, hath God raised up,’ had been the keynote to the early teaching of S. Peter. The Resurrection was the truth which filled the earliest Church with converts; the Resurrection was the decisive proof that Christianity came from God.

III. And lastly, the power of the Resurrection should be traced and felt in the spiritual and moral lives of Christians. Let us remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is not merely an authoritative Teacher, not merely our Redeemer from sin and death, but also, and especially, through real communion with us, the Author of a new life between us. He gives us a new nature which is indeed His own. S. Paul teaches us this again and again, and by a great variety of expressions Sometimes he speaks of our Lord as though He were a sphere of being within which the Christian lives: 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' And sometimes he speaks of Him as an inhabitant of the soul: 'Christ in you,' he says to the Colossians, 'the hope of glory.' And this union is not the language of metaphor in S. Paul's mouth; it is to him just as real a thing as eating, or walking, or reading, or preaching, or going to Athens, or going to Jerusalem. It is an actual experience of which he is certain. S. Paul knew that it meant for him, and that it might mean for others, a solemn reality. It was this inward power of Christ's Resurrection, in its ever-increasing fulness, that he chiefly desired to know. And of this power of Christ's Resurrection, of this moral and spiritual resurrection, which issues from, and corresponds with, the Resurrection of Christ from the grave, there are three leading characteristics.

1. First, our Lord rose really. It was not a phantom which haunted the upper chamber, or the road to Emmaus, or the shore of the Sea of Galilee, as the Apostles who had to handle Him could see; for a phantom had no such flesh and bones as they might see He had. And our Easter resurrection from sin should be no less real. It will be no less real if it is His power by which we rise. The 'flesh and bones,' the actual substance of renewed life, true prayers, true confession of sin, true resolutions, truth in thought and word and act—these are indispensable. To have a name to live again, and yet to be dead, is only too easy; it is scarcely less easy to impose upon ourselves than upon others with the phantom of life. Little indeed will a phantom resurrection avail us here or hereafter. Let us pray for that first mark of Christ's resurrection power—reality.

2. And our Lord, as He really rose, so He rose to lead, for the most part, a hidden life. On the day of His Resurrection He appeared five times, but rarely afterwards during the forty days that preceded the Ascension. So it is with the unseen life of the soul. It is not constantly flaunted before the eyes of men; it seeks retirement and the sincerities which retirement ensures. Those whose religious life is perpetually displayed to the public eye may have risen really, but they are at least unlike our risen Lord. 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.' 'When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with

Him in glory.' Reserve in speaking about ourselves may make heavy demands upon buoyant and impetuous natures; frequent retirement for communion with God is not natural to flesh and blood; it is wanting in the demand for excitement and human sympathy which enters so largely into much of our modern religion; but let us be sure that it is a true note of the presence of Christ's Resurrection power that we should be thankful to be often alone with God.

3. And once more· our Lord, 'being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.' His Resurrection power does not lend itself to the perpetual alternations of relapse and recovery which mark the lives of so many Christians. 'Being raised from the dead, He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.' It is sad work when Easter is only reached to forfeit by relaxation what little may have been gained in Lent and Passiontide. We may sink into the grave of sin once too often.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection.

The power of His Resurrection. PHIL. iii. 10.

I SEE why S. Paul calls the Resurrection our justification. It justifies Christ's strong word, 'It is finished.' It justifies the herald of mercy to go forth and proclaim that God's justice is satisfied. It justifies the faith of the poor sinner to lay hold upon his pardon and his peace—all riveted by the Resurrection.

The Resurrection indorses the promises; it gives strength to every argument of hope, and it is well called 'the power of the Resurrection.'

I. S. Paul is not speaking abstractly of the great power of Christ, which the Resurrection shows—though I might enlarge upon this; because I might show that the Resurrection proves not only the power in which it originated, but the immense power to which it led—when, bearing His raised Body to heaven, Christ at once assumed kingly Power—manifesting it at once by two distinct acts of sovereignty, one of grace and one of justice: one, in the kingdom of grace, by sending down the Spirit at the day of Pentecost; and the other in the kingdom of justice, by sweeping away Jerusalem with the besom of destruction.

This was 'the power of the Resurrection,' but we can deal now only more directly with that which concerns ourselves.

When Christ then rose this day from the grave, He rose not as a man; but as a man who is representative—as the Man who is the head of a body, the Church. Therefore, mystically, as things are in the mind of God, as God sees them—that is, according to the real truth of things—for the things we see upon the earth are the shadows, and the ideas in the mind of God are the substances, of which the things on earth are the shadows—I say, as God sees things, all true believers did actually rise in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ this morning.

For, just as His natural head and His natural body rose visibly, so, spiritually, invisibly, the Head of the Church rose, and all the members of the Church rose in Him.

It is difficult to find language to clothe this thought, nevertheless the thought is a substance. Else what does S. Paul mean in the epistle we have read, 'If ye then be risen with Christ'; or, 'Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him'; or that in the Ephesians, 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places.'

And so, if you only be in Christ you are risen: you cannot choose but rise. It is in your unity with Christ. It is part of your identity with the head in which you live. It is 'the power of His Resurrection.'

Then, where is your life now? Here? No. Taken up—bound in the bundle of life—hid with Christ in God.

What room is there for fear? Who can pluck it away? Who can rifle a treasure so locked, so sealed? What malice, what despair, what enemy, what force, however strong, can ever match with 'the power of Christ's Resurrection'?

II. But now we must see the warrant on which such a confidence as this in the soul of a man rests.

You know that for every great work which God does for us outwardly, there is a certain corresponding counterpart, which He does in us inwardly; and the latter is as a reflection of the former, and proves its reality to us.

Thus, was Christ born? In like manner He is born in your heart. Did Christ die upon the Cross? So must our souls be crucified for Him. Did Christ rise from the grave? There is a moral resurrection in the feelings and affections, which has to take place even now, by His grace, in all that are His. Did His risen Body ascend? The spiritually-risen soul is always ascending higher and higher; nor stops till it finds its only home and resting-place in the throne and bosom of God.

Thus, every incident of the life of Christ throws out its reflection—is seen in the Christian—lives over again in every spiritual mind.

Now, here I arrive at another power of the Resurrection of Christ. As the sun goes forth into the heavens in the spring-time of the year, and as it goes, draws out of their little winter's graves and up towards itself, by its attracting power, all the germs and secret energies of leaf and flower, so does the risen Saviour do in His people's hearts.

You once lay dead—dead and motionless—in nature's cold and barren night—when there came, in God's own spiritual spring-time, to you a little stirring of the sap,—a little motion of the Holy Ghost within you. Your thoughts began to put forth a few fresh desires after light and holiness. Your affections began to warm themselves; and as they warmed, they grew into greater strength; and sweet buds of thought began to expand into the open flowers of free communion and more open service; and then God came into His own garden to eat His own pleasant fruits. Your hopes and longings are grown heavenward; and though, to your own senses, you are growing lower and lower, yet, in the eyes of the Church, you are evidently a man every day ripening for eternity.

And what is the hidden spring of all that is going on in your soul, whereby it is rising from its grave of nature, and shall every day rise higher, till fit, finally, to stand before the throne of God? I answer simply, 'It is the power of the Resurrection.'

Which of us has not even now some precious, buried seed in the garden of the grave?

And are they hidden from us for ever—those sweet and bright and well-remembered faces? Nay, but we know that He who has said, 'I am the Resurrection,' is all He is for His people: we know that He shall stand again upon this earth—into whose presence, when He walked this earth before, death never came but the dead one lived. I am as sure, therefore, as if I heard Him say it even now, upon that dear one, 'Thy brother shall rise again!' that we shall meet, and we shall embrace, and we shall love one another yet, with an eternal love. DEAN VAUGHAN.

The Vile Body changed into the Glorious Body.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.
PHILIPPIANS iii. 21.

IT is remarkable that the highest festival of the Church, and the greatest event of all history, concerns emphatically the body. The everlasting life of the spirit is a doctrine of heathenism. Unrevealed religion, and almost universal instinct, teaches that. But the future life of the body is a tenet which belongs to Christianity. I do not suppose that we can arrive at any certain proof of 'the immortality of the body,' but by revelation. We can find analogies which lead up to it. Nature is full of it. But analogies are not demonstrations. The proof is the Bible. Establish inspiration, and you establish the immortality of the body. In this sense Christ could say, 'I am the Resurrection.' So exclusively did He both make it, and teach, and prove it.

It is well that we should learn, on this day, to give its right honour to the body. There is a way in which the world falsely elevates it; and there is also a way in which Christians as falsely depress it.

One great object of the Gospel is to make us think less of the body of the present, and to make us think more of the body of the future. The Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, all belong to the body. Jesus loves the body well. He speaks about it. He did His miracles on it. He fed it. He established His sympathies with it. He redeemed it. He raised it. He spiritualised it. He glorified it.

And it is not too much to say, that there is no good thing you can say of the soul, which you cannot also predicate of the body.

This is that which belongs especially to Easter. Let us pursue the thought a little further.

It is a true and speaking picture of the body, as it is now, which underlies that expression, 'our vile body.'

You are perhaps aware, that the first and proper meaning of the word *vile* is not so much what is bad, but what is worthless. We may add it to the long list of words which have obtained, through false use, an exaggerated and worse sense than they originally carried. It is, literally, poor, or cheap, or nothing worth. The exact term which S. Paul uses in this passage is a very touching one, 'Who shall change the body of our humiliation.'

'The body of our humiliation!' And how painfully accurate that description of our present body is, who has not found?

Necessary as it is to us, and proud as we may be about it, nevertheless it is a body of humiliation. It matters not about age or station, high-born or low-born, rich or poor, it is to us all a body of humiliation every day. Notwithstanding all the time, and all the money, and all the care we may spend about it, every day, to please it, to dress it, to keep it! And there are all the humiliating functions which it has to perform; and the many things which almost reduce it to the level of the lowest animal.

And how does it repay us? When we are well, it tempts us to sin: and when we are ill, it tempts us to despair. One time it induces selfishness, and drunkenness, and gluttony, and evil passions; and another, low spirits, and irritableness, and nervous fears. It is far more a clog to drag us to the ground than ever it is a wing to help us to soar.

Who has not felt what a humbling thing it is to be sick and dependent upon others? And who has not found how it is no less humbling, when raised to health again, to forget all the good resolutions which we made in our sickness? And who has not often thought: 'Oh, what might not my mind become, but for its cumberings! How spiritual I should be, if I had no sickness, and no weariness, and no weakness worse than death!'

You are pretty, and it makes you proud; or, you are plain, and it makes you mortified! There is the weakness of childhood, and the decrepitude of age! the grey hairs, the waning beauty, the dim eyesight, the weakened memory!

And it is a humbling thing to die, if you look only at the physical part of death; it is a humbling thing to die! And then, after death, —'earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust.' As there have been during life, so after life, there are things so base and degrading, that we cannot speak of them and we dare not look at them. It is a true word S. Paul chose, 'the body of our humiliation.' And the pathos was no poetry, when he exclaimed, under the sense of the depression, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

If you look at it religiously, if you examine what is the secret of almost all the difficulty, and the source of all spiritual conflict in every believer, it is that at our conversion our souls are changed, but our bodies are not changed. We carry a new being within an old one. The body is not altered till the Resurrection; the spirit has already undergone a very great transformation. Hence the battle and the misery; the spiritualised part clogged and cumbered by the carnal, waits and longs for the complete renovation of the whole being! 'We ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' That is the resurrection-change. When the new spirit shall clothe itself in the new body at the Second Advent. For so again S. Paul speaks: 'For we that are in this tabernacle,' *i.e.* in this body,—'do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed'; he did not find pleasure in the thought that, ultimately, he would be a spirit without mortal covering—not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon—with a new spiritual body, 'that mortality might be swallowed up of life.'

But how, the question is, how does it pass from the body of humiliation to the body of glory? Let us look at the history of our body, as far as we can read the outline of it, from what has been revealed. When we are told that at the beginning man was made in the likeness of God, not his spirit only but his whole being, what can we infer but that his Body was then formed after the model of that Manhood which God had, from all eternity, planned to pursue in the Person of Immanuel? so by anticipation man's body copied the body of the future Christ.

So that it is not impossible that Adam, in his unfallen state, was, physically like, not the same, not perfectly like, but like that Body which now belongs to Christ glorified.

The Fall sent the Body down to the unspiritualised and unglorified state: the body fell from glory to humiliation. 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!'

One object of the redemption is to restore the lost heavenly body. Accordingly, we trace the successive processes of Christ's own Body. It was first at our level, a natural body, subject to the same laws, and infirmities, and necessities, as our own present bodies, only without sin.

Then, after the Resurrection, it became a spiritual body, identical, but changed, and subject to some, but not all the conditions of our present nature.

For example. It was visible; it ate, it drank, it spoke as before; but it moved as a spirit moves.

When Christ ascended to heaven, after the forty days, a further change took place; the spiritual became a glorified body; so S. Stephen saw it, and S. Paul, and S. John.

What that glorified body is, we have no power to conceive. The nearest approach which we can make to any idea of it we must draw from the Transfiguration. There Christ probably appeared in His glorified form and beauty.

Putting then, together, the little which we know upon it, concerning the spiritual and glorified body, we conclude that it is a body quite the same as it is now for all purposes of identification—to be recognised, known, claimed, loved, as before; with all its former characteristics; that it is body still, and does bodily actions, and renders bodily service; but that it is perfectly free, untrammelled, and unclogged; as spiritual as spirit itself, and in perfect light and beauty, invisible, mature, dazzlingly glorious, as the sun itself; capable of the presence and the communion and the reflection of God. That is the outline—as far as I can see it—of the body glorified. It is almost incredible, and yet it is as true as any doctrine of our creed, that this is the body which we are to have. To use S. Paul's beautiful expression: 'Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory.'

We are to go through the same transformation till we reach the same holy loveliness as Christ Himself.

If it be asked, 'How can this thing be?' I can only answer, 'It is high ; I cannot attain to it.' But by whatever power Christ wrought all His miracles, by whatever power the wonderful processes of nature are regulated and sustained, by whatever power Christ will take the government of the whole world, and place 'His enemies under His footstool,' by whatsoever power He has drawn and saved your soul, and made it His own, by that same power will He 'fashion us like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.'

To this wonderful and blessed process, remember, that death and burial are only necessary parts. The seed I sow seems already dead, and when I put it into the ground it becomes more dead : it decays, and dies away, except one little, almost invisible germ ; but that germ lives, and that germ will send up yet another plant ; and what seed can ever be compared for beauty to the flower that sprang from it ?

I cannot follow the process ; but I know that it has its duty.

And it is just so here : the falling of this body has its duty—purposes which all lie in deep mystery, and which have their appointed order ; and when the season of its spring-tide comes, it will well repay the winter of our sad waiting !

You take your last look upon that pale face, which now, for the first time, has no echo to your voice ; and when you smile, it smiles not again ! It is the body of humiliation ; but, when the great Easter morning comes, that smile will waken again, and that voice will have a deeper melody, for then it will be no longer the body of its humiliation, but the body of its glory.

My text, then, places the body in its right proportion. Do not think too much of it—for it is, at the best, and you will find it, a body of humiliation. Do not despise it ; do not abuse it ; do not trifle with it ; for very soon it will be the body of glory.

But as with Christ, so with us. There is an intermediate stage—shadowed out by those forty days—between the humiliation and the glory. You must grow more spiritual. Your very body must partake of the increasing purity of the sanctified soul, with less of earth in it, and more of heaven in its tastes and habits ; and when the vileness of nature takes the impress of the divine, how great is the glory !

Then, when 'we shall know one another, even as we shall be known,' the union will be perfect, and the joy will be infinite, for this very reason, because we shall all be in the likeness of the glorified Jesus. 'I shall wake up in His likeness, and I shall be satisfied.' 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

EASTER DAY

The Power of His Resurrection

The power of His resurrection. PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

I. THERE is no sublimer fact in the spiritual history of man than his steady, unwavering belief in his own immortality. Encompassed on every side by darkness, he yet proclaims in every age his unalterable conviction that there is light beyond. Tossed always by storm, and often lost in blinding mists, he yet believes that he is steering straight for that haven which eye has never seen. Faced by the spectre of death, he still perseveres in the certainty that life is all and that death is nought; and when the soul seems to perish he holds that it does but pass, with the wings of the dove, to life and spring and heaven's bloom and the bosom of his God. We may loose the silver cord and break the golden bowl: man will still believe that God is for him. Take him into the churchyard, wrinkled with its green mounds, and ask with scorn, 'Are all these who lie here immortal?' and he will say, 'They are.' Stoop in the sepulchre and take a handful of dust, and ask, 'Was this immortal?' and he will answer with his indomitable 'Yes.' It is all the more sublime because of the obtrusive violence and tremendous volume of the facts by which it is confronted. Nature and experience and the oblivion of the grave seem to laugh it to scorn. Man lives amid a universe of death. The very ground we tread on is full of the dust of death, of the material particles which have been used by living organisms since the time of Adam; dead genera, dead species, dead generations, dead empires, dead races. As far as outward facts are concerned, as we walk by sight only and not by faith, death seems to be the sole universal despot, and the prodigy of life to be ended with the greater worm. The great and the small, the rich and the poor, are there; servant and master are mingled in undistinguishing death. We know very well that the same fate awaits us, and awaits us soon. The dead are the more in number, and long before another Easter has come round many of us who now sit here will have joined that greater number. Day by day brings us nearer on the downward slope to the rolling waters of that prodigious tide which has swallowed up our fathers. Thinner that curtain of darkness than a spider's web through which day by day, year by year, one by one, we all shall pass, and each one of us shall pass alone. And how strange, how oppressive, how awful, how unbroken is the silence of all these unnumbered dead! From the other side of the curtain not one gleam of light, not one syllable of sound, from all these millions has ever come. The wise man enters the darkness, but out of it he cannot speak even the three words to us which we would barter for all his wisdom. Dante has nothing more henceforth to tell us, nor Shakespeare, nor Milton; childhood and innocence can whisper from it no syllable of consolation to the breaking hearts of father or mother. And generation after generation the children of men, wise and unwise, innocent and guilty, believe in their immortality with a faith insensibly sublime.

II. How is this? It is partly because there is something in man far above the evidence of his senses. What the lips of silent death cannot or will not reveal to him, that God whispers into his soul; and therefore he believes insensibly that death is the semblance, and that life is the reality, even if the mind sinks into dotage and the body into dust. Among nations unenlightened by special revelation this belief has faded into vague hope, and a life of sin does more by far than anything else to weaken and destroy it; but to us who are Christians, to all who are the true children of the Kingdom, God hath in these last days spoken by His Son, and given to us in Him, not a fond expectation, but a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. It is Christ alone who in the highest sense has brought life and immortality to light. The tomb is dark no longer; the message of Easter has made it luminous, it is bright henceforth with angel presences; we have learned by fellowship with His suffering to know Christ and the power of His Resurrection.

That Resurrection is the central fact of all Christianity. To the Christian it needs no further proof; as certainly as we live, as certainly as we shall die, so certainly we believe that Christ rose and that with Him we too shall rise. Unbelievers criticise the evidence of the Resurrection as though it were an isolated fact; hence they say the historic evidence is insufficient; to us, on the other hand, the historic evidence is irresistible, and yet the very weakest we have. To us the proofs of the Resurrection are, not only the Gospel, but Christianity and Christendom, and, most irrefragable and most unassailable of all, the inward witness of Christ Himself. To us the Resurrection is not a mere historic fact, but an inward power. To infidels the fact seems to stand alone; to us it is but one fact of a long series which form our very life. They come to it as though it were some inaccessible mountain peak starting up suddenly in miles of precipice out of the level plain. It is not so to us; it is but the central peak of the great mountain chain which begins in Paradise and whose mountain summits traverse the whole range of human history. To the infidel the Resurrection is an impossible violation of the laws of nature; to us, for whom nature is but a reverent synonym for the will of God, the Resurrection is the supremest fulfilment of all that is divinely natural. Believing in God, who includes all nature and transcends all nature, believing that Christ was manifest in the Flesh, to us the Resurrection is not against nature, but Christ having shaken off the cerements of the grave, rather is it to us impossible that He should have ever been holden of it. We must first learn to know Christ; then and then only, then beyond all reach of doubt and difficulty, we shall know also the power of His Resurrection. And how is Christ to be known? Not by dogmatic definitions, not by formal orthodoxies, not by sensational sermons, not by ordinances, not by 'three hours'' services—no, but only by a soul that loves the truth, only by a pure and holy love. He who thus knows Christ, shall know the power of His Resurrection.

III. But we must never forget that as the Resurrection is not an isolated, so it is not a secondary fact. The Apostles, the early witnesses of the Church of God, put it in the very forefront of their testimony. By the stupendous importance of its meaning, it stands side by side with the Creation. That was the victory of Omnipotence over nothingness; this is the victory of Omnipotence over dissolution. Both are parts of the same divine universal work of love, the redemption of mankind. There are some, there are many, in these days who would fain persuade us that Christianity would still be Christianity if we gave up altogether the supernatural. It is a delusion, as S. Paul told us nearly nineteen centuries ago. If no living Christ issued forth from the garden-sepulchre, that becomes the grave not of a man only, but of a religion, with all the hopes based upon it, and all the splendid enthusiasms which it has inspired. 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God';—you see how little S. Paul evades the full brunt of the issue—'we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ.' If the dead are not raised, if Christ be not raised, then your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins, ye have not then been redeemed; 'then they also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.' S. Paul confesses that if we give up the Resurrection we give up everything with it.

DEAN FARRAR.

The Power of Christ risen.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. COLOSSIANS iii. 1.

SOME good men among the heathen recommend us to live a divine and heavenly life here on earth; and beautiful indeed were the sounds of such wisdom in a forlorn world; but, after all, they were but like sweet strains heard in a desert, as fair and bright clouds which drop no rain. There was no strength in advice so wise and good to lift up our poor fallen nature. But how different is it on this day to us, when it comes clothed in the language of the Epistle, and supported by the facts which the Gospel discloses; when it comes to us in the majesty and power of Heaven, and the full revelation of the Incarnate Word, God made Man. It constrains, it lifts up, it moulds into the living Body of Christ risen, every one that is worthy to stand. For the Gospel says, 'Christ is risen'; the Epistle, 'Ye also are risen together with Him.' On this day we are taken out of ourselves, and set on high, made new creatures in the second Adam. He 'hath set my feet upon a rock, and ordered my goings. He hath put a new song in my mouth.'

The Old Testament lessons tell us what this day is in type; the Psalms what it is in prophecy; the Gospel what it is in history; but the epistle for this Sunday, what it is in doctrine and precept, to be fulfilled in ourselves, without which, type and prophecy and history will avail us not.

The Resurrection of our Lord, like His Transfiguration on the Mount, set forth the regeneration of the body, as it is to be hereafter when changed and glorified; and to this life therefore the regenerate soul is in Christ even now to aspire, and to live above the world in that blessed hope.

'He was crucified,' says S. Augustine, 'that He might show on the Cross the dying of the old man; He rose again, that He might show by His life the newness of life that must be in us.' And another Latin Bishop: 'The Resurrection of the Lord was not the end, but the changing of the flesh. That body which before could be crucified, was now become incapable of suffering; that was become immortal which was before made subject to death; that was become incorruptible which before could endure wounds. Let, then, the people of God acknowledge that they are in Christ a new creation. Let no one fall back again into that state from whence he hath risen.'

And observe how S. Paul ever makes us one with our risen Lord; as if His Resurrection and our own were but one resurrection. 'The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit.' 'The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.' And hence follows, 'as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy.' The first life, as earthy and of the earth, has objects seen and perishable; the second, as heavenly and of heaven, has objects unseen and eternal, which shall appear with the Lord when He appears from heaven.

This brief and sweet epistle for Easter Day contains a beautiful epitome of the Divine life hid in God; a life which bears about indeed 'in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,' and is known by signs of mortification; even as our Lord's risen and glorified Body bore still, and was known and recognised by the marks of the wounds by which He died. Thus must the Bride yet for a while fast and mourn in the absence of our Lord, while still clothed with this body of corruption; but purified by those sorrows, and partaking of His cup, and of His baptism, she obtains more and more eyes to behold Him, 'whom having not seen' she loves; 'in whom, though now' she 'see Him not, yet believing,' she rejoices 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

II. We may observe what has probably occurred to us as remarkable in the selection of this passage for the Gospel of Easter Day; that there is no mention in it of Christ risen, no evidence beyond that of the open grave, no appearance of our Lord stated in it, not even the Angel's declaration that Christ is risen; but the great end and object of it is contained in this which is stated of the beloved disciple, from whose Gospel it is taken, that 'he saw and believed' though he had 'not seen.' It is the greater blessing declared by our Lord Himself, and apparently with a reference to this very circumstance of S. John, 'Blessed are they who have seen not, and yet have believed.' It is, moreover, the duty and crown especially held out to ourselves, that we believe in Him while withdrawn from sight. It connects together the Epistle and the Gospel. For the Epistle exhorts us to believe in Him though we see Him not, so as to be risen together with Him; and the Gospel shows us how divine love is ready to do this, even from the very first, and while as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

'The absence of the Lord,' says S. Augustine, 'is not absence; have faith and He is with thee, whom thou seest not.' And the history of this great and glorious day itself will supply us with every form and variety of faith, in which He is found by those that seek Him. He was found this day by S. John through faith which needed not sight; in that purity of heart which hath the vision of God; He was found by S. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and the chief of penitents; He was found in the assembling together of the Church and the Apostolic company, the doors being closed; He was found and known in the breaking of bread; He was also found and first seen by her who first sought Him, early and in the dark, by Mary Magdalene, by the loving, earnestly-seeking, mournful sinner, the returning daughter of Eve. She first saw the bright and Morning Star, and she wears for ever the crown of this great day. And what if on this day in all these days we seek Him; ere the rise of the morning, in the setting of the sun, with loving penitence, with contemplative wisdom, in apostolic fellowship, in the assemblage of the faithful, and in the breaking of bread. I. WILLIAMS.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Glorious Destiny of the Human Body.

The Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. PHILIPPIANS iii. 20 21.

CHRIST did not rise, as He did not die, only for Himself. He rose for our justification, as He died for our sins. In this present life we share His righteousness when He gives us His new nature, but the virtue of His Resurrection is not exhausted on this side the grave. His Resurrection it is which secures to you and to me a bodily resurrection hereafter in glory—a resurrection which is to take place at some distant epoch when all that now meets the eye of sense shall have passed away. It is the last, it is the most munificent of the gifts of our risen Redeemer. 'He shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.'

What then, I ask, is the nature of the change referred to in the text?

I. Observe S. Paul's way of describing the human body in its present stage of existence. 'Our vile body,' he says, or, as it would be better rendered, 'our body of humiliation.' The human frame appeared to the Greek artist the most beautiful thing in nature. It was the form which seemed to the Greeks most nearly to unveil the divine beauty to the eye of sense. We know from their sculptures which have come down to us how fondly they studied it. They have left in stone the splendid record at once of their unrivalled genius and of their persistent enthusiasm. How impossible it is to imagine the phrase 'our vile body'—'our body of humiliation'—upon the lips of the men who decorated the Parthenon. We cannot. The very words point to another and to a totally distinct world of feeling and of thought. The truth is, that such a phrase as this, 'our body of humiliation,' implies that the man who uses it has seen deeper and higher than the things of sense. The Greek knew only this visible world: he made the most of it. The Hebrew had had a revelation of a higher beauty; and when men have really come into contact with the eternal they sit lightly enough to the things of time. The Greek was occupied with the matchless outline of the human form. The Hebrew could not forget that his bodily eye rested, after all, on what was a perishable mass of animated clay. He could not but think of what was coming, of the decaying texture and substance of the flesh, of the darkness and corruption of the grave. So Isaiah, 'All flesh is grass, the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth ; the flower fadeth.' So Job, 'Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up as a flower, and continueth not.' So the Psalmist, 'As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.' So, quite in the spirit of the Old Testament, S. James, 'What is your life ? It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' And in the same way S. Paul says, in characteristic phrase, 'Our body of humiliation,' and the phrase gathers up and embodies the mind of both the Testaments. It describes the body which is destined assuredly to disease and to death. Prophets and Apostles, they do not write as artists: they write in view of the eternal realities.

'Our body of humiliation.' Man is something higher, something nobler, than the animal form with which he is so intimately identified that it is certainly part of himself. Man, in the eye of revelation, as in reality, lives on the frontier of two vast mysterious worlds—the world of pure spirits, and the world of animal existences. By his spiritual nature, or soul, he belongs to the ranks of angelic intelligences who rise above him in tier beyond tier of being, upwards towards the awful throne of the Father of Spirits. And by his bodily frame man belongs to the world of animal existence which stretches away beneath his feet, first through the higher creatures who seem by their powers of association and instinct to have something like a spiritual nature haunting them, down to the point at which, amid zoophytes, animal life sinks away almost by imperceptible gradations into the lines of vegetable existence. Man, I say, alone among the creatures occupies this, the great frontier post in nature, by having a body on the one hand, by being on the other a conscious spirit. And from the point of view of his higher, that is to say, of his spiritual existence, his body naturally enough seems to him to be a body of humiliation. It is a body of humiliation ; and we Christians should regard it as only a degrading encumbrance, to be treated, perhaps, like an ill-mannered stranger who had forced himself upon us, whom we could not well get rid of, yet wish to keep in his place, if it were not that a flood of glory has been shed upon it, and that it has great prospects, and a splendid future in store. We Christians know that our nature, as a whole, has been ennobled as well as invigorated by the Son of God. Bending from His throne of heaven, in the immensity of His love, He has taken it upon Him in its integrity. He has taken body and soul alike, and joined it by an indissoluble union to His own eternal person. That Body which was born of Mary, which lived on this planet for thirty-three years, which was spat upon, which was buffeted, which was scourged, which was crucified, which underwent the stiffness and the coldness of death, and was raised again in glory, that Body exists somewhere still in space at the right hand of God the Father Almighty (so our poor human language struggles to speak out the tremendous truth), and thereby it confers on all who are partakers in human flesh and blood a patent of nobility of which our race can never be deprived. 'Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself took part in the same.' Yes, He has ennobled us, and yet, while this life lasts, how great is the interval between our condition and His! How unlike is that Body of glory which rose from the tomb on Easter morning to our body—unlike in its indescribable beauty, in its freedom of movement, in its inaccessibility to decay, in its spirituality of texture!

II. 'His glorious Body,' exclaims S. Paul. Yes, Christ's greatest gift is to come. We too, every man of us, shall die as the creatures around us, whether by violence or by slow decay. He only knows. But if we are in Him He will gather up what death has left; He will transfigure it with the splendour of a new life; He will change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. Sown in corruption, it will be raised in incorruption: sown in dishonour, it will be raised in glory: sown in the very extreme of physical weakness, it will be raised in a strictly superhuman power: sown a natural body controlled on every side by physical law, it will be a true body still, but a body that belongs to the sphere of spirit.

III. Such a faith as this in the Resurrection, when it is seriously entertained, must—it ought to—have great consequences. If we parted company with the body of death for good and all, if the soul was the only part of us which had a future in store for it, it would not matter much what was done with this perishing husk, whether in life or in death. But if this body of humiliation has before it a splendid destiny, then we shall treat it in life and in death as princes are treated who live in expectation of a throne, with all the care and honour that its prospects demand. And hence, after death, respect for the human body is a natural result of Christian belief in the Resurrection, of belief that the inanimate form lying before us is not utterly gone for ever, that it certainly has a future. I will not say that respect for the dead has no place in heathendom. There are natural instincts corresponding to the guesses which man, in his unenlightened state, makes about his destiny. There are vague apprehensions, too, of dark, ghostly powers who may, it is thought, do an ill turn to the irreverent. These things suggest respect. But

EASTER DAY

Christianity has made respect for the dead a rule—has given it reason, has given it body and permanence, by its great glowing faith in the coming Resurrection. Just as the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ after His human soul had parted from it, and had descended into the region of the imprisoned dead, was carefully wrapped in fine linen and laid in a tomb until the morn of Easter, so, ever since, the bodies of departed Christian believers have been looked upon with eyes conveying something of the faith, something of the love of, Nicodemus and Joseph. We know that they, too, will rise.

H. P. LIDDON.

Easter Day.

WHEN the Roman Empire became Christian, it was common for the Emperor to release prisoners, and to proclaim a general pardon on this day ; actions at law were generally suspended, debtors forgiven, slaves freed, and increased alms given to the poor. S. Gregory Nyssen declares : ‘ Every kind of sorrow is put to rest to-day, nor is there any one so overwhelmed with grief as not to find some relief from the magnificence of this festival. Now the prisoner is loosed, the debtor is forgiven, the slave is set free, and even he who continues a slave derives benefit.’ Slaves were allowed to rest from their work during the week of Easter, and a general holiday was observed.

It was natural that every means should be adopted to add solemnity and beauty to the services of this festival. Persons of all ranks carried lamps or tapers in the churches, and even in the streets, as a part of the services on Easter Eve—‘ turning,’ says the same S. Gregory (Naz.) ‘ night into day ’; and in each church one special wax taper of large size was solemnly blessed as the ‘ Paschal Taper,’ for a type of Christ rising from the dead to give light unto the world. The Emperor Constantine, it is said by Eusebius, observed the festival with such magnificence that he set up in various parts of the city huge waxen tapers ‘ as large as columns.’

Traces of this splendour of service which was thought proper for the Easter Festival may still be seen in (1) Proper Anthems instead of the *Venite, exultemus*, (2) Proper Psalms and Lessons, (3) the substitution of the *Quicunque vult* for the Apostles’ Creed, (4) the Proper Preface in the Liturgy ; though these are but relics of, or substitutions for, the richness and beauty of the old services. It may be interesting to notice that the anthem, ‘ Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us,’ is a part of the antiphon in the second vespers of the day, according to the Sarum Breviary. The whole was sung in procession with the cross before matins. The latter part of the anthem was that appointed in the Sarum Office as (a part of) the Epistle for the day.

When Jesus lives in the soul, His life-giving presence never passes away. It is not affected by any lapse nor varying conditions of time; it exercises the ever-present 'power of an endless life' (Heb. vii. 16) It has to do also with beings which are immortal, with conditions and states of being which are to be henceforth changeless and eternal (2 Cor. iv. 18).

Therefore this undying presence of Jesus, coming from His undying life, is the cause of an everlasting Easter in the soul (Gal. ii. 20). . . . That which the sun is to the natural world, is Jesus Christ to the spiritual world, and equally to each individual soul. . . . As by the sun and the moon the world is enlightened, so by Christ and by the Church our minds and our souls are edified and made wise unto salvation' (founded on Origen).

Easter.—The whole of life should be to us a Lent, to prepare us for the Sabbath of death and the Easter of resurrection (S. Bernard).

Symbol of the Resurrection.—In a Swiss churchyard, the grave of a very poor person was marked by an inscription in nothing more enduring than ink, the paper being fastened to a stick at the head of the grave, and protected by a little sloping roof. A very frail memorial, but pathos was added to it by another circumstance; for under the shelter by the writing a caterpillar had established itself, had there passed through its death-like state of a chrysalis, and had finally flown away as a butterfly, leaving behind the empty and corpse-like cocoon. What an analogy to the body, just as lifeless, which mouldered below! What an emblem of the Resurrection!

S. J. EALES.

Alms and Alms-Bags.

And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.
S. MATTHEW xxviii. 9.

I. AFTER our Lord's Resurrection, 'the disciples came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.' At Easter we would approach at any rate to His feet; if we cannot realise the brightness of His revealed person in heaven, we would draw nigh when the skirts of His glory fill the earthly temple. We would come and worship Him. But how? I would with all deference assert that few things are less understood by Christians than worship. The dignity of it, the privilege of it, the joy of it, the claims of it upon you. Worship is the rendering of ourselves to the object of our worship. It is not receiving either advice or benefits from Him. It is that which the inferior renders to the superior; the superior renders a favour or grace; the inferior renders worship. It is all that we men can render to God. This has been much lost sight of. Here below it must needs be imperfect; for whilst here there will always be mixed motives and half-grudged tributes.

Between us men and our God it is the 'rendering ourselves, our souls, and bodies,' that S. Paul tells us is 'our reasonable service.' You see each part is provided for. The inward thought and motive, the intention to do all to the glory of God; the outward expression, whether of word or deed; the body chaste, temperate and sober for God's sake, the mouth making confession unto salvation; the life in an attitude of grateful submission to God.

II. There are many sides of worship; this is only one, and I have only touched on it. It might be more pleasant to try and paint with poetic fervour the glories of the seraphic worship around the throne of God on high; is it not more profitable to examine some of the things that mar our worship in the courts of God's throne on earth? Let me then draw attention to one other point. Almsgiving is a part of worship; not only alms to the poor directly, but alms for the maintenance of anything belonging to God—His house, His ministers, work for His Church at home and abroad, hospitals for the body, missions for the soul, and so forth. When Judas objected to the waste of emptying the precious ointment on the feet of Jesus, he received small praise. And we perhaps by the practice of almsgiving habitually might find a means of holding Jesus by the feet; drawing near to Him humbly, ministering to Him, worshipping Him.

'Give unto the Lord the honour due unto His name: bring presents and come into His courts, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' We should be free from the stigma of offering unto the Lord our God of that which costs us nothing. If we could only realise that the Lord is in His Holy Temple, that we give as unto the Lord, we should tremble equally at the idea of uttering to Him words of prayer or praise that we did not mean, or of professing a homage that we do not offer, or of acting a devotion that we do not feel, or of sacrificing the blind and lame, and giving Him what we do not particularly care about keeping for ourselves.

G. C. HARRIS.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Walking in Newness of Life.

(*For Monday in Easter Week.*)

He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. 2 CORINTHIANS V. 15.

BLESSED are these holy days wherein we walk with Christ risen; would that they might abide with us always; let us make the most of them while they last. An event which is passed in time, while kept in memory it passes not, is renewed and with us still; such is the mystery of the human mind, making the things of time to partake of its own eternity. So is it with the Resurrection of Christ; it is recalled year by year, nay, continues with us a lengthened Lord's day from Easter to Pentecost. Even on this day only how many things crowd upon us in the Church's service. In the First Lesson there is the bread from heaven renewed every morning; and in like manner in the evening First Lesson, the hands of Moses held up, and availing, like Christ's prayer on the Cross, till the going down of the sun. Oh, significant type of this our state! Then in the Second Lessons there is carrying on of the same instruction by the history of our Lord's Resurrection in S. Matthew, and in the Acts the lame man walking. All these things abide with us still in commemorating our Lord's rising from the grave. But more than all, in the ancient and Catholic altar service itself we have S. Peter, the Apostle of the Jews, testifying to the calling of us Gentiles into Christ's marvellous light; and in S. Luke's Gospel, Christ's walking with us unto the end, conversing with us, opening our hearts to understand the Scriptures, making Himself known to us in the breaking of bread.

'And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight.' It was for this that their eyes were holden so long; it was for this that He opened to them the Scriptures; for this He kindled and drew out their desires after Him, and went in with them. It was in them for our sakes: that in the Holy Eucharist we may have light, and find Him in the breaking of bread. As the eyes of the blind man He opened by degrees, and first anointed, and sent to the pool called Siloam, so now He holds their eyes, as it were, in darkness, while they put forth their hands and feel for Him, until they come to that His own appointed means of illumination, 'Do this in remembrance of Me'; 'the commandment of the Lord giveth light unto the eyes.'

I. Again; still further instruction have we in this our Easter lesson. No sooner were their eyes opened to know Him, than He vanished out of their sight. To see Him therefore, and to know Him, is this to have Him depart from us? Oh, no! surely far otherwise. It is to have Him more intimately near to us in the spirit, not needing sight. This is better and more blessed. It was true on this occasion, as He had said before, 'It is expedient for you that I go away'; and as He said to Mary Magdalene this morning, 'Touch Me not'; and as S. Paul says, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more'; 'Behold, all things are become new.' What need had they of His bodily presence, to whom He hath given His Flesh to eat?

II. Many are the appearances of our Lord at His Resurrection, and each of them in itself like a type or parable containing in it much hidden instruction, unfolding its sweetness as we unbind its meaning; but none that so enters into our every day and domestic or social life as this incident, raising up to heaven our familiar walks and conversations, investing them with a divine life and character, as what may be in fellowship with Christ risen. He is revealed, no longer 'as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night,' but 'the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble.' No longer 'as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day,' for it has an abiding character; it partakes of His own eternity, who is 'the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever'; the Sun that goes not down. Christ is risen; nay more, they also are risen with Him; for He is 'the living Bread which came down from heaven'; 'if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.'

From that earthly Jerusalem we with Him are cast out as travellers and pilgrims seeking a better country, and a city that hath foundations, which are the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb; but now, if need be, in heaviness, we go on our way weeping, knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But He will vouchsafe His presence with us unto the end; and though too often our eyes are holden by unbelief, and knowing Him we know Him not, yet our cold hearts burn within us at His Word; and the Scriptures come home to us as the honey and the honeycomb at which the fainting eyes of the weary Jonathan were lightened. And ever and anon, if we keep His commandments, and with charitable and holy thoughts constrain Him, He will come in to us, and abide with us, and manifest Himself to us.

I. WILLIAMS.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Curiosity and Obligation.

(*For Monday in Easter Week.*)

Peter seeing Him saith to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? S. JOHN xxi. 21-23.

I. PETER'S question concerning John threatened an unseemly encroachment upon Christ's sovereign rights over the work and destinies of the disciples. Christ had first called, and then, with His own blood, redeemed the Twelve, and had so established a supreme claim to determine all that concerned them, and it ill became the disciple, who had forsaken his Master in the agonising moments that made his ransomed servants an inviolable possession, to arrogate to himself what looked very much like a co-assessorship with the Master, in fixing the lot of the several disciples. Peter's question assumes that he has the right to say something on the subject. The temptation to officiousness and egotism presents itself in the golden moments of his restoration, and whilst he is hearing a strange premonition of the manner of his own death. He asks about the after-career of the humbler and more steadfast disciple at his heels, as though he were godfather, and must needs inspect and review and certify the counsels of the Lord's Providence concerning him. No wonder men came to believe in the official supremacy of Peter, for in his less watchful moments he believed in it himself, and we are accustomed to take men at their own estimate. But the Master admits Peter to no place of primacy over his fellows, He puts upon him no sponsorship for their work and welfare, He pays no respect to his assumed right as spokesman, and will not consent to place the threads of the future in his hands. The risen Lord must needs remind Peter that his duty is to follow, and imitate, and obey, and not to judge; and to do this will employ all the thought and strength he can bring to bear. He is misconceiving Christ and his own relation to Christ. As Jesus appears with the prints of His death in hands and feet, the witness of a perfected redemption, and the pattern of every divine excellence, Peter is in danger for the moment of making Him into a magnified fortune-teller. No wonder the question was repelled. Christ fixes the life and determines the service and suffering of His disciples as He thinks best, and will have no intrusion upon his prerogative. The sanctification of Christ's blood rests upon that life and service, and every question that trenches upon Christ's royal right as Redeemer is an impertinence.

II. Duty, Christ intimates, is the most important part of destiny, and the purpose of His Word is to guide and train and strengthen in duty, rather than prematurely to unfold the romance of our after-days. Indeed, we make our own history as we go along, and there is no fortune worth talking about other than that which we work out for ourselves by successive acts of obedience to Christ. It is idle for us to seek to know the things that will befall us in the after-times, for whatever is vital springs out of ourselves. Peter's question perhaps implies that duty and destiny are not uniformly interdependent things. Fit occasion and opportunity are necessary to achieve the work of the man or of the apostle, and no man without tragic ordeals in his life could ever hope to sit on the Lord's right hand or left. Are there grand openings in the man's pathway? Will he have the chance of distinction? Can he write his name on some page of the world's history? That is the false view. He does great things who obeys the call of duty, and there is no term that can be put to the honour opening out before that man who sets himself steadfastly to follow Christ. The foredetermined incidents of a man's history are the least important things about it, mere dust poised for a moment in the air and gone. The day comes on apace when conduct will count for everything. The life of man must be cherished not so much for the romance to which it may give rise, but for those spiritual qualities that reach fruition there. Life may be ensheathed in splendour, and full of imperial occasions, and yet beggarly in its issues. Personal loyalty to Jesus Christ is the one interest which must absorb our thought and strength. If we could know our own destinies or the destinies of those to whom we are attached, it might be a temptation to supineness or a demoralising distraction. We might find ourselves in the position of the man who rests upon the gifts of fortune, and never shows the world one tithe of what is within him. Unnecessary preoccupation with the affairs of others may blind us to the force of individual obligation and betray us into faithlessness. The future of the disciple is with Christ no less than our own, and we must be quite content to leave it there. Do not dissipate the strength needed for personal service in amiable officiousness about the concerns of others. It is your high privilege to follow Christ. His voice calls you, and if you follow you will allure other feet into the same pathway of honour and immortality, and add something of value to their destinies.

III. The craving for romance, which sometimes takes quite a religious form, is the sign of a restless, unsatisfied, insufficiently exercised mind.

Two things ought to have brought absolute contentment to Peter on this fair early summer morning by the quiet lake-shore: the thrilling incident of his own forgiveness, and the new vocation coming from the Master who had so graciously restored him.

The grace that gave to him the privilege of caring for Christ's redeemed flock should have cured the last spasm of restlessness and brought the profound contentment of established love. His susceptibility to the romance of the unknown was the proof that his nature had faculties which the vast interests of his work at present did not satisfy. If life is not sufficiently interesting to us, if we cry out for that which more effectually stirs the blood, if we want sensation, be it in our own lives or in the lives of those about us, that is a sufficient proof of the fact that we are not alive either to the infinite privilege of our forgiveness, or to the vast duties and responsibilities that are laid upon us, and that we cannot be permitted to decline.

T. G. SELBY.

Confession and Faith.

(*For Tuesday in Easter Week.*)

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Rom. x. 9.

THE Scriptures to-day for the Epistle and Gospel, the same as in other Churches, are but a continuation of those for yesterday. On Easter Monday we have S. Peter's account of our Lord's Resurrection; to-day that of S. Paul: S. Peter's to the Gentiles at Cæsarea; S. Paul's to the Jews at Antioch; in both what may be expressed in S. Augustine's words, 'After His Resurrection He called the Church from the whole world, no longer weak upon the Cross, but strong in heaven.' By the accounts of our Lord's death and sufferings our hearts are knit to Him; but in His Resurrection is our hope. 'It is not,' says the last-mentioned writer, 'the praise of the Christian faith that they believe Christ died, but that He rose from the dead. Even the heathen believes that He died.' For this reason, on these days the Church does not set before us reflections on Christ's rising, from the epistles, but the evidences of it from the Acts of the Apostles.

I. That which serves for the condemnation of the unbeliever, setting at nought all his wisdom, works in every way for the good of the faithful; and so is it with this the marvellous fulfilment of these things. It was such as quite surpassed all the thoughts even of good men: so that when our Lord so often spoke to the Apostles of His sufferings and Resurrection, it is said they 'understood it not,' 'the saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.' And after He was risen, when the women brought word to the Apostles of what the angels had declared unto them, 'their words seemed to them,' it is said, 'as idle tales, and they believed them not.' The events themselves were such as 'entered not into the heart of man'; so much so, that when they heard them repeatedly and fully spoken of, they could not understand them; and when they were fulfilled, they could scarcely believe them on account of their great and marvellous nature. Now, if that was the case then, so will it always be in the fulfilment of those things of which Scripture speaks: the great mysteries of Godhead, the wonders of redemption, things which lie before us, and are around us, and beyond us in Christ's spiritual kingdom; such as no senses are cognisant of, no thought of man hath conceived. Such is this the mysteriousness, the utterly incomprehensible nature of the great and good things of God. There is something in this consideration which greatly tends to repose of mind; it quiets our anxious imaginations and the restless curiosity of our natural thoughts. 'The peace of God passeth all understanding.' Never was greater faith or peacefulness of mind expressed than in those words of Abraham, when finding how utterly beyond him were all God's promises, and the mode of their fulfilment; when God said to him, 'Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward'; looking up, as it were, in adoring love and wonder he said, as a child would to his parent, 'Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?' In this entire uncertainty of what God is about to do with us and for us, this our natural inability to comprehend His promises which we most surely believe, there is the greatest source of joy to a humble and confiding spirit. If we look abroad; if we look forward and beyond; if we try to fathom what is to be; if we let our too high imaginings and inquisitive speculations form to themselves ideas of the great things of God, with regard to this world, or to the next, of ourselves and of others, we shall disquiet ourselves in vain, and, perhaps, like the Jews, be deceived by our own wisdom, and make shipwreck of the faith; but if we commit ourselves into God's hands, labouring to do His will, as those who know nothing now as we shall know, God, who makes known His mysteries unto babes, will reveal unto us 'the secret things which belong to Him.'

II. 'And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet.' It is ever thus, by marks of His sufferings that his Saviour is known to the sinner; it is in these He is loved, acknowledged, and embraced; 'Behold, it is I Myself'; He that was 'acquainted with grief'; Behold from these wounds, that it is I Myself; in these am I known; it is no counterfeit, but the Man of Sorrows. Yea, even on His throne is He known as the Lamb that was slain. 'I know My sheep, and am known of Mine,' as the true Shepherd; for the Good Shepherd is He that layeth down His life for the sheep.

And while He bids us raise up our hearts to meet Him, He descends also to meet our weak thoughts, and to raise them to Himself; 'Behold' My wounds, nay more, 'handle and see Me'; that we may be able to receive, to apprehend, and know His Presence, which is peace. What a marvellous mystery of condescension; what a continual miracle of His grace, that so it is still, at the Holy Eucharist! It is not only *sursum corda*, raise your hearts to heaven, but also, put forth thy hand. 'This is My Body' which was wounded, 'which is given for you.' The day of Light is the day of His Body rising from the grave. And He who is the Resurrection and the Life, as God and Man, is the Light that lighteth every man. And what if at this Sacred Feast we see not with bodily eyes; yet by faith we apprehend His Body, we see and feel His wounds with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.' He is known to His own by marks of suffering; and by marks of suffering are His own known to Him; they that mourn in Him are comforted; they that labour and are heavy laden are called to Him; by being conformed to the likeness of His death, they know the power of His Resurrection, and are united to their Risen Lord.

God 'hath brought us out into a wealthy place;' to us, Lent is passed; if passed by us well, we are risen to a new life, new hopes, new desires; 'I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them' again? I. WILLIAMS.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Strange Idea of the Resurrection. THE Koran enjoins man to shave his crown. The Sunnees shave the entire head except a long lock in the centre, whereby, it is said, the archangel may pluck them out of the grave!

Spiritual Resurrection. IF I be dead within doors (if I have sinned in my heart), why, *suscitavit in domo*, Christ gave a resurrection to the ruler's daughter within doors (S. Mark v. 40), in the house; if I be dead in the gate (if I have sinned in the gates of my soul), in mine eyes, or ears, or hands, in actual sins, *suscitavit in portâ*, Christ gave a resurrection to the young man at the gate of Nain (S. Luke vii. 11); if I be dead in the grave (in customary and habitual sins), *suscitavit in sepulchro*, Christ gave a resurrection to Lazarus in the grave too (Ps. ciii. 3; Isa. i. 18; S. John xi.).

EASTER DAY

The Passover. Exodus xii. 13. Epiphanius tells us that the Egyptians used, at this time of the year, to mark their cattle, trees, and one another with red ochre, which they fancied to be a preservative from death; it probably took its rise from the sprinkling of the lintel at Passover time.

A Remedy against Despondence. Exodus xiv. 15. 'Let me mention,' says Sir W. R. Hamilton in one of his letters, 'what I think an important secret of experience; namely, that, blessed a thing as meditation is, it is action, rather than meditation, which is the appointed remedy, the divine specific, against despondence; and that present duties which may at first seem irksome, are part of the medicine wherewith God healeth the sickness of those that are broken in heart.'

Resurrection of the Body. 1 Cor. xv. Not, as some suppose, the restoration of the old, a recomposition of the same particles that existed in the old body, but of another and a nobler quality, suited to the organ of perfectly sanctified spirit. In the resurrection body we enter upon a distinct and higher stage of life than that occupied by the body which has been laid in the earth. 'A building of God, a house not made with hands,' in contrast with that in which we suffered pain and sin and suffering, and in which we 'groaned being burdened.'

Resurrection of Christ. Rom. iv. 25. Without His Resurrection the death of Christ would be of no avail, and His grave would be the grave of all our hopes (1 Cor. xv. 17). A Gospel of a dead Saviour would be a miserable failure and delusion. The Resurrection is the victory of righteousness and life over sin and death.

Resurrection: The Christian Risen with Christ. And now, how am I conformable to Thee; if when Thou art risen, I lie still in the grave of my corruptions? How am I a limb of Thy body; if, while Thou hast that perfect dominion over death, death hath dominion over me; if, while Thou art alive and glorious, I lie rotting in the dust of death? I know the locomotive faculty is in the head; by the power of the Resurrection of Thee our Head, all we Thy members cannot but be raised. As the earth cannot hold my body from Thee in the day of the Second Resurrection, so cannot sin withhold my soul from Thee in the first. How am I Thine, if I be not risen? and if I be risen with Thee, why do I not seek the things above, where Thou sittest at the right hand of God?

The Resurrection Flower. There is a plant found in sandy deserts and arid wastes, which is called Anastatica, or the Resurrection Flower, from a remarkable power of recovery which it has. When it has flowered, its leaves drop off, its branches become dry and hard, and the plant in a little while is seemingly dead. But so soon as it touches water again, it gradually expands, its leaves unfold, and life returns. It is a parable. If in its death-like state it is a figure of the backslider, its resurrection figures the alone source of revival; he must get back to the Fountain of Living Water again.

The Resurrection. Epitaph on the Late Charles Reade, written by himself.

Here Lie,
By the Side of his Beloved Friend,
the Mortal Remains of
Charles Reade,
Dramatist, Novelist, and Journalist.
His last Words to Mankind are on this Stone.

I hope for a resurrection, not from any power in nature, but from the will of the Lord God Omnipotent, who made nature and me. He created man out of nothing, which nature could not. He can restore man from the dust; which nature cannot. And I hope for holiness and happiness in a future life, not for anything I have said or done in this body, but from the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. He has promised His intercession to all who seek it, and He will not break His word: that intercession, once granted, cannot be rejected; for He is God, and His merits infinite: a man's sins are but human and finite. 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins.'

First Sunday after Easter

(Low Sunday)

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. JOHN V. 4-12.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XX. 19-23.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	NUMBERS XVI. 1-36.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	NUMBERS XVI. 36-end OR XVII.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	1 COR. XV. 1-29.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	S. JOHN XX. 24-30.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Touch Me Not.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. S. JOHN xx. 17.

IT would seem to have been the first impulse of S. Mary Magdalene, on that Easter morning, to rush forward and clasp the feet of Him whom she now recognised as the Lord and Master of her life, whose dead body she had been seeking with tears but lately in the rifled tomb. There she has been standing in her overshadowed life, from which the last struggling rays of light seemed to have gone for ever. She had stood by the Cross, and seen all, and heard all. 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' What logic of facts could be more irresistible? 'This is your Saviour; behold your God.' The majesty of the law, the authority of the priests, the influence of religion, the brute passions of the mob, had all cried out together, 'This Man blasphemeth, God cannot die.' But, no, Mary Magdalene holds on with a desperate hope. Once an influence had come across her life, once a Power, not of this world, had arrested her, once, on the very edge of the precipice, the clouds had parted hither and thither, and she had seen a view not of this earth, unknown to its beaten paths, and she had stopped to pick the flower that grew there—penitent love; and now it is all rushing back with the tingling smart of awakening life; it is His voice, it is His form. 'Mary,'—the sound of her name, as He pronounces it, carries with it the memory of happier days. Once more He is at her side to protect her from the terrible past, to guide her in the golden present, to lead her out into the ever-brightening future. 'Rabboni,' she says, 'My Master,' in the utter self-abandonment of her life to Him, the Guide, the Teacher, and the Sanctifier of it all, in the first rush of the warm tide of reviving hope. But, was it coldness, was it reproof, or was it the foreshadowing of an altered relationship? She is met with those words, which the human voice no doubt could soften, but which sound strange to us, and something like reproof: 'Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'

I. What, then, did our blessed Lord mean? There have been three main interpretations given of these words, bearing respectively the names of three great writers—S. Chrysostom, S. Gregory, and S. Augustine—either of which may be true, or which indeed may be all true together.

According to the first interpretation, these words were said to check her. There is a slight want of reverence in her greeting, some want of respectful restraint in her recognition, some want of a higher penetration in her love. She rests satisfied with the earthly form; it was her Master come back again just as He was before. 'Rabboni,' full of love as it was, rushing in after the desolation of her loss, had not the same full meaning as 'my Lord and my God,' in which, as we heard this afternoon, S. Thomas found vent for his returning faith. She was to learn to carry her thoughts higher, and further from the Resurrection, to the Ascension: if He was her Saviour, much more was He her God.

The second interpretation sees in these words an indication on the part of Christ that she was to lose no time. He had an honour in store for her to be the first apostle of His Resurrection. Just as Barak was punished for his want of faith when God sold Sisera into the hand of a woman, so the half-hearted Apostles were to receive the first message of the Resurrection from the mouth of a woman. It was her great honour that He should meet her thus and send her when He Himself could have told them with His own mouth. And so He would hasten her, they tell us, He would quicken her: 'Touch Me not; lose no time in salutation, lose no time in greetings, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; I shall be with you forty days as yet, but go to My brethren, lose no time, and give them the glad message, I ascend, the higher life is begun.' And so, in accordance with this interpretation, we read that S. Mary Magdalene and the other women were afterwards permitted on the same day to hold Him by the feet and worship Him.

But the third, and probably the truest, interpretation is that in these words our blessed Lord was trying to lift her up from earthly things, earthly thoughts, earthly ideas, to something more high, to something more real, as if He would say, 'That which you enjoy now is not the full restoration which is possible to you. I shall be here only forty days to be seen and heard, but when I have ascended I may be touched in a way in which I never could be touched before; My Ascension will be the beginning of a new union': as S. Paul says, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.' His Ascension brings Him within reach of us all by the touch of faith. It is now as it was of old. The multitudes throng Him and press Him, in the history of His life, in the record of His works, in the contemplation of His example; but only those who have faith touch Him. By His Ascension He is near to all of us, and heaven is opened so that where He is thither we may also ascend; by His Ascension heaven is opened, and the Holy Spirit is descending upon the Church. It is but the completion of the Easter message, 'He is risen': 'Go and tell My brethren I ascend.'

Let us then, while still lingering in this Easter festival, try for a few moments to place ourselves in the position of S. Mary Magdalene; let us listen with her, let us learn with her on this Low Sunday. We too, it may be, have heard this day that gentle word, 'Mary!'—that utterance of our name which carries us back to the time when we sat hopeless and weary and beaten down by a sevenfold domination, and there came One and cheered us, and rescued us, and saved us, and now we say, 'Now I begin to be myself.' 'Mary!' it is the voice which breathed through the Church's word of pardon when those mocking passions, which carried me almost powerless in their hands, fell back; when I no longer spoke with an alien voice, nor acted an alien part, but began to be myself. 'Mary!' it brings back to me those days of the Son of Man, when all was bright and pure, before sin had sown its thorns and briers, and armed the world against me, and brought in weariness and fatigue, before the golden gates of Eden shut behind me, and I wandered in an unyielding earth bristling with temptations and sown with woes. 'Mary!' it is the voice of many a Communion, when I was stirred to the very depth by holy desires and the presence of God. And perhaps even now we feel an impulse, a stirring of holier aspirations, a desire to put ourselves back, to renew, to live again the brighter days of our first enthusiasm. If so, let us listen.

II. 'Touch Me not.' Does He repel us, does He refuse us, or does He reject our advances? No. He is calming, He is hushing, He is deepening, He is stirring impulse into resolution. For the words speak to us, first of all, I think, of reverence, of that which has been called from this place 'the sincere acknowledgment of a greatness higher than ourselves which God demands from all that approach Him.' 'God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him.' He is not the gardener—she knew that; He is not her Lord and Master as He was before. 'Rabboni, my Master,' must give place to 'Jesus, my God.'

And Easter-time is just one of those festivals when we are brought face to face with the supernatural. It is the limit of the world of sense where we stand to-day, from which we look out over the interminable vista of the supernatural, the resurrection of the body, life from the dead, victory over the grave. We think, it may be, sometimes, as we read of Christ's self-denial, that we could match that; we think sometimes as we read His teaching that we could rival it in systems of ancient and modern morality; or, as we read of His philanthropy, we think in our foolishness that we could equal it; of His plan, that we could surpass it. But on Easter Day He stands back from us. None of our greatest heroes, none of our greatest philanthropists has been crucified and risen again on the third day; no human spell that we can utter can give life to the dead body, no human imagination can picture more than the immortality of the soul, or an absorption into the great self-existing unity of the world's life. But on Easter Day Christ is clothed with a supernatural light; His words, 'Touch Me not,' claim from men a new homage beyond His other works of power; He checks the onward movement of love with a hush of recollectedness, 'Be still then, and know that I am God.' And should there not be, I ask you, a gathering spirit of reverence stretching out from the Easter festival until it floods all our religious life with light?

How familiar, for instance, do we get with the Holy Word of God; how free and how full is our access to it, how well known are its histories, how true its precepts, how common its phraseology! And we forget its supernatural claims, and the reverence and the veneration due to it—such veneration as suggested that the Book of the Gospels should be put on a throne at the great councils of the early Church. And we forget to look for the supernatural in them; we forget that we ought to rise up from reading the Holy Scripture as though coming from a Presence; we forget the real Presence in the Scriptures, second only to the mysterious Presence of our blessed Lord in the mystery of the altar, so that in listening to its words we can hear in its rhythm the faint murmur of the voice of God Himself, like a child who listens in a shell and fancies that he hears sonorous cadences whereby, to his belief, it expresses mysterious union with its native sea. Here, too, He would seem to say to us, 'Touch Me not,' from the mysterious height of His supernatural life—'Touch Me not,' while we remember, as has been so wonderfully said, that the utmost that criticism can do is to prepare a correct text for the spiritual eye.

So is it again with the holy mysteries. We become so familiar to them, and we forget how of old they were shrouded with a deep reserve of screen, and barrier, and veil, and long-drawn aisles, and mysterious gloom, or else regarded with awe amounting almost to dread, or only reserved for special times of solemn devotion, whereas now there is the tripping in and out before God with no preparation, just as the whim takes us. Surely we need in this day, when services are multiplied and Communions are so frequent, to lay well to heart these words, 'Touch Me not,' which stream from the supernatural life of our blessed Lord, and to see behind and beyond the visible veil the true form of Him that 'liveth and was dead, and, behold, He is alive for evermore.'

And so it is with the Church. How familiar we are with it all! How closely domestic interests have grown, for instance, around the font where the child, whom we love and who carries with it all the newly-found pride of paternity, is to receive a name and become a living personality in the active world. How Confirmation again is associated in our minds with the renewal of vows, and a great opportunity for young people who have run a step or two alone along the broad road to be called into a higher path of strict obligation. Holy matrimony, how completely that has become an occasion of excitement and mirth, so that the solemn tones of the Marriage Service are almost resented as the presence of a wedding guest who attends the feast clad in sombre attire. Sunday is pressed to the very utmost verge as a day of rest in relation to work. The dogmatic creeds of the Church are viewed as so many abstract propositions without any direct bearing on the business and the supernatural life of man, so that to insist on their meaning and the necessity of belief in them is often resented as a piece of bad taste and bigoted satisfaction with our own view. Oh! behind all this Christ on this Easter festival seems to insert Himself and to withdraw behind them. Holy baptism is supernatural. 'Touch Me not.' It is no mere graceful symbol, but a stern requisite to the entering into the state of salvation. Confirmation is no mere strengthening of the will from within by renewed resolutions, but a bracing up of the whole man from without by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Holy matrimony is a mystery, signifying the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His

Church. Sunday is linked on by the Church to the old Sabbath principle which underlay, and which underlies still, all God's dealings with His people. So with the whole faith: it is not of men, not by the will of man, but it comes from God Himself. We shall not be examined at the last day as to how much or how little we have intellectually assimilated, but as to how much we have made our own by faith, and how much our lives have been moulded by it. 'Touch Me not.' On this Easter festival reverence before the supernatural stands out as one great lesson which we should all do well to lay to heart.

III. Once more, let us all follow a second interpretation and see, if you will, in these words a message of urgency. 'Lose no time in salutation, waste no precious moments in touching, you know the glad truth, your heart has caught the living flame; but there are others sitting at home sad and disconsolate on this Easter Day: go and tell My brethren, with all speed, that I ascend.' Ah! indeed, we feel it; as we kneel here to-day, there are thousands and thousands within sight of this cathedral who are strangers to the glad tidings of Easter, men and women who are seeking the living among the dead, dead themselves in trespasses and sins, who have lost happiness and lost hope, men who have seen their faith die, and all their stock of religious principles gibbeted on the cold, stiff gallows of hard facts; the light has died out of their Christmas, the melody has melted away from the Easter anthem. Easter is a day in the calendar, the day before Bank Holiday, and nothing more; slowly and reluctantly they have given it up, silently and stealthily the devouring tide has submerged the smiling landscape of their religious life, and still it advances towards that last little spot whither they are being driven back with a desperate resistance, where all that they can see and touch melts away at the approach of death, and then—ah! indeed, the message is urgent, 'Go and tell My brethren,'—so urgent that some people would tell us: 'Don't you stop to load yourselves with hard theological facts or to clog your steps with dry Church dogmas; do not linger to formulate your message, you church-goers, you are wasting your time, the solemn peal of the organ, the gentle kiss of the melodious waves of music, the solemn holding of your adoration, is all waste of time while souls are languishing and sighing in ignorance and despair; leave all this religious luxury, and go and tell "My brethren" in the courts and alleys of this city, the outcast, the wicked, the careless, I ascend.' Does He say this? Yes, and no. It is only too easy to run away with a message imperfectly understood, to go we know not where, to rescue we know not whom, to say we know not what. Mary is no casual worshipper at the Easter sepulchre; she has had her Good Friday, she has had her

Lent; conviction has been born in her with sharpest travail-pangs of vanquished doubt. No, it is useless to go without the Master's message, to convey that which we ourselves have only imperfectly realised.

'Go and tell My brethren.' The message is urgent, doubtless, but Mary is sent just because she had mastered it. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' this quivered through every motion of her face; her voice, her very feet, were eloquent as she ran to bring the disciples word. But we, surely, we must linger long in the calm solemn dignity of the Church, and study His form and listen to His message, so deep and so earnest, which knows no haste. A great man whom God has lately taken to his rest in His good providence away from the Church which so sorely needed him, away from the nation whose interest he so carefully watched, by sudden death, is reported to have said, 'I divide all men with whom I have dealings into two classes by this test, whether or not they believe in the Day of Judgment.' It is just this. Do we ourselves believe in the life beyond the grave? We who are so anxious to start off with the message, do we propose to exhibit any sign or test of the great fact of resurrection beyond the mere playthings of culture and civilisation; can we exhibit ourselves, for instance, as alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God?

'Go and tell My brethren.' Ah! what a quantity of lives come across yours, will come across them in the mazy paths of life. You remember perhaps how the great novelist describes some people sitting by the window listening to the footsteps echoing round the courtyard where people were hurrying in from the gathering storm, and how one says to his friend, 'As I sit here and listen to the footsteps, I have often made them out to be, those echoes, I have often made them out to be the echoes of all the footsteps that are coming by-and-bye into our lives.' So, as we sit here, as we sit here to-day, we may listen to the footsteps which will come across our path; some little footsteps needing help, some light and thoughtless, heedless of the black and sputtering rain-cloud mounting up behind them; some weak and listless, some heavy and sad. Oh! how you might help them! Each one who is cold and lifeless, and without the bright glow of Easter, is not only missing a joy out of life, but he himself is a quenched beacon; he deprives others of the message which he might have delivered. Yes, go and help your brethren, hand linked in hand, a chain of good, until you reach them. The message is no doubt urgent. Easter is no luxury of religious indolence. 'Go and tell My brethren I ascend.'

Just one moment. Perhaps we have not yet reached the full meaning of those words. We saw there was another interpretation still;

a third and perhaps the truest explanation would have us view in these words the great declaration that the Ascension of our blessed Lord would be the beginning and condition of a newer and truer union. 'Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father,' as if to say, 'Then, then, when that last triumph is accomplished, you will be able to enjoy the communion which as yet is impossible to you.' Yes, in these words He invites us all to come nearer to Him, to touch Him in the closest possible union, the union of sacramental life. Is it so, that we stand so aloof from religion as if we were afraid to commit ourselves, content to linger in its very outward forms lest we should go too far, to clothe our talk in its phraseology, to ask ourselves, 'What is the least possible amount of religion which I can conform to and yet be saved?' Just as sometimes a man will ask, when he is asked to contribute to some charitable organisation, 'What is the smallest amount of money which a gentleman can give?' Religion has no charms for such as these; it becomes more and more distasteful, more repugnant, more hateful. It is like an absorbing game which appears to an outsider the merest waste of time and the most absurd puerility; it is like the formulæ of mathematics which appear to the poet, it may be, mere barbarous gabble, conveying no distinctive impression on the brain, and leaving no intelligible idea on the mind. Yes, take one who has no ear for music to a concert, or one who has no eye for art to a picture-gallery, what misery it is to him! What monotony, what unintelligible misery! So with religion and religious services; its very persistence, its monotony, its supernatural claims, are maddening. It demands something from us, it demands our very all, and the very extent of these demands seem impertinent, its promises seem extravagant, its assumptions ridiculous, simply because we have stood outside it all, and watched it without understanding, followed it without effort, used it without love.

The late Bishop of Durham speaks of the spiritual faculty by which we approach religious truth, as an infinitely subtle and delicate mechanism; he tells us how opportunities let slip are the unfailing indications of spiritual decay, till disuse is followed by paralysis, and paralysis ends in death, and we are left without God in the world. Perhaps we hardly understand the impassioned language with which the heart of man has caught at this offer. 'Touch Me not, not yet,' with its tremendous possibilities in the future; and yet all down the history of the world we can trace the touch of His presence like a river in a dry plain, fertilising all that it reaches—polygamy with its horrors brightening into the Christian home, cruel neglect of the sick giving place to the hospital and the Church's care for the sick and dying, gladiatorial shows and all their accompanying horrors abolished by a respect for human life, and the alternations of passion turned into the rights of man, common peace instead of war becoming the normal attitude of mankind. And so the teaching of Christ waits to transform our very lives, something more than an example to follow, something more than a code of morality to be enforced by His sanction. He waits to touch the leper with the water of Baptism—'I will, be thou clean'; He waits to touch the palsied life with a word of power where the will is present to us, but to do that which is good is not; He waits to raise us higher and higher. He takes us by the hand, and we are able to walk when we were sinking back into the engulfing waves of this troublesome world.

Yes, we may touch Him now, but surely with more earnestness of love just because we are palsied, or diseased, or faint and weary, or because we feel safe in His grasp. Surely we want more purpose, not that spasmodic spirituality which our failings, or our whims, or our caprice make to be the measure of our devotion. A great preacher once said, 'It is impossible to estimate the effect of one Communion lost in the life of a Christian.' Oh! it is a tremendous idea which He puts before us when 'not I but Christ that dwelleth in me' might be our reality, when our wills might be caught up in His will—'I wish to have no wishes left, but to leave all to Thee'; when 'Thy will be done' will be said by us, not in sullen resignation, but in acquiescent love, to reach that state where, when temptation comes, it finds the ear deaf, and the eye closed, and the heart secure, and the inclination gone, 'dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God,' to be so wrapped up in Christ that trouble cannot find us, or only strike us through Him. 'Thou shalt hide them privily by Thy own presence from the provoking of all men. Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.'

As we look out into life from the solemn hush of this church, it is full of trouble and full of difficulty. Think what you may yet have to go through before you die. Already the forces are in motion that are to sever your connection with this busy world; already the soldiers are marching towards you, bearing the cross of crucifixion. Have you that principle of life which transforms the soul, which defies change and trouble, sin—yes, death itself—because the touch of faith links you on to the great I Am? So Mary speaks to us on this great Easter festival. The great condescension of our risen Lord made her forget herself in the rush of returning love—forget all that was behind and beneath that well-known form of her Lord and her God, waiting even now to ascend in majesty to His throne on high. And so she bids us reverence the supernatural, and whether in His Holy Word or in His Holy Church, ever to listen to His warning voice, 'Touch Me not, be reverent, I am God.' With her we have heard in those words also a call which quickens us and urges us on. We must not linger in spiritual selfishness or forget others in religious luxury. We have a duty to our brethren, we must learn our message and hasten with the news, 'I ascend.' But, above all, we have received with her the message of our Easter life, we have learned that to us there comes from Him now ascended into Heaven a life and a power which we may touch and be saved, a life which passes into us, so that living and believing in Him we may never die. And, as the old statue of Memnon, as the sunlight lit upon its grim stone in the first flush of the morning, was fabled to utter a responsive melody, and awaken into sound, so as the Sun of Righteousness touches our cold nature with its Easter beams, it may quicken our energies and revive our life; and He, our Lord and Master, as He sees the old taint die away, the old disease relax its grip and new life come with its full course into our soul, will demand from us the loving recognition of His healing touch, as, before the whole company of Heaven, He will proclaim the fact of our deliverance, and the merit of our faith. 'Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.' CANON NEWBOLT.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Faith's Conquest.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 S. JOHN V. 4.

THAT there is a contest carried on in creation between opposite principles was so apparent even to the heathen, that many of them imagined the existence of two opposite deities—the one dealing out good, and the other engaged in counteracting that good. We who have the divine revelation know better than this. We know that a fierce conflict goes on between evil and good, but that only good can be referred to the Creator—evil originating exclusively with the creature. This earth, which God designed for the habitation of an innocent, and therefore happy race, has been converted, through the apostasy of that race, into a battle-plain, upon which Satan and his emissaries measure their strength with Jehovah and His hosts. The contest between Christ and Satan is a contest for the souls of men, and its battles are fought on the narrow stage of individual hearts more frequently than on the wide area of nations or provinces. There will, indeed, be occasions upon which the struggle is between opposing thousands. The armies of the infidel will come up on one side under the banner of rebellion, whilst the Church of the living God stands on the other with the sign of the Cross for its standard. In cases such as these the warfare is open, and men see it and take part in it as though it were a marshalled combat between rival princes. But ordinarily the battle is fought in individual hearts; and until a man's own breast is the theatre of war, he will remain an utter stranger to the desperate struggle which is daily taking place around him; and he will consider you as discoursing on something lamentably visionary, if you speak to him of Christ and Satan as grappling for the mastery on his right hand and on his left. The unconverted man is at peace with the devil; the converted man is at peace with God, and therefore at war with the devil.

Let us give ourselves to the careful consideration of this proposition, in regard as well to the matter of fact which it asserts—the world overcome, as to the agency to which it ascribes such result—the faith of the believer. If we show you, first, that the world is overcome: and then, that it is overcome through faith, we shall have established the assertion of the Apostle, 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

I. Is it true, is it borne out by the experience of the Church, that the renewed man overcomes the world? Is he never overcome by the world? or is his being ever overcome to be taken in contradiction to all pretensions to godliness, so that because he has not overcome the world in this or that instance, is it therefore to be concluded that he is not 'born of God'? Woe unto all of us if such reasoning be sound! Woe unto us all, even those who have walked the longest and the most steadfastly with God, if our text is to be interpreted by this rigid law! if it be enough that the world gain once the upper hand in order to its being proved that we are still unrenewed! It is not to be denied that the Apostle makes no exception. The assertion is as broad and unqualified as another which he advances a few verses after: 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.' We have only to say, in answer to this, that we must be just as scrupulous of introducing contradictions into the Bible as of disguising its assertions. Undoubtedly, it is the general representation of Scripture, that in our present state of being we shall continue imperfect, that our attainments whilst on earth shall never be so lofty as to leave no higher point to which we have to reach. And to this general representation we are bound to adhere. If we meet with detached passages which seem to militate against it, we must make the single text bend to the many chapters, and not do violence to the many chapters, in order to uphold the apparent force of a single text. Thus, in the instance under review, we cannot plead for the literal fact that the renewed man always overcomes and never sins, unless, at the same time, we are prepared to shut our eyes to the deficiencies and shortcomings of the saints. We must, therefore, take a modified interpretation of S. John's strong sayings. The renewed man 'overcomes,' and the renewed man 'does not sin,' in the sense of the object which he has in view, rather than of the end to which he has attained. The sayings are to be interpreted of what is habitual, and not of what is occasional. His habits are those of victory and of righteousness. When he fails to conquer, or falls from obedience, the failure and fall are exceptions to ordinary success and general steadfastness. Hence we may say, the renewed man overcomes, because, though sometimes defeated, to be the victor and not the vanquished is his habit, and we say that he 'sins not,' because, though he often offend, disobedience is but his lament, for reluctance precedes and repentance follows the commission. The renewed man does not sin as the unrenewed does. He sins as one surprised by an enemy, and not as one seduced by a friend. And this difference goes far to demolish the wonder that S. John has declared—that he 'sin not' at all.

But without insisting further upon expressions, which, though unqualified in themselves, are sufficiently qualified by other portions of Scripture, we conclude that it is *habit* to which the Apostle refers. He is said to 'overcome the world' who is always at war with it, though a man may not always be equally successful. I think, and I believe, that whenever a Christian sets himself to fight the world he is sure to overcome it. It is possible to be perfect, because the means provided are sufficient; it is impossible, because the constant use of those means presupposes a vigilance which would of itself be perfection. It is possible always to overcome, if we always kept the sword in hand; it is impossible, because, through the weakness of the flesh—a weakness which Christ compassionated rather than upbraided in His disciples, when He said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak'—impossible, because, through weakness of the flesh, there will certainly come seasons at which the grasp is relaxed. Hence, we neither question the power of the Creator nor apologise for the faults of the creature. The Creator gives the means; the creature must use those means. The means are ample enough for the attainment of perfection, but then they must be used with a diligence which can exist only where perfection has been already attained. The Christian might always overcome if he could always keep himself spiritually awake. What then? Has God made it an unavoidable thing that the Christian should spiritually slumber? Perish the thought! God may be said to have given us alarums enough to banish sleep altogether from the soul, but then He requires of us, as responsible creatures, that we wind them up for ourselves. And all we contend for is, that the supposition of our never once failing to wind up each alarum is equivalent to a supposition that we are already perfect, that at least we are perfect in one respect—perfect in vigilance. Surely it will not do to assume that man is already perfect, in order to prove that perfection lies within reach.

II. And now as to the agency through which the result is effected. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

There are many who can testify, from experience, that the Christian's life is one of conflict with the world, and that when he overcomes it, it is through the agency of faith: that, depending on Christ for redemption, works by gratitude and love, and realises at all times the supporting presence of God. You have met with the world in battle, and you have returned in triumph from the field. What shall we say to you, save that He who gave the strength, in which you have heretofore vanquished, is as mighty as ever to aid you in the struggle? I know not individually what your trials may be. I know not the precise form which the world assumes when it meets you in conflict. But this I know, that your great High Priest was tempted in all points even as ye are, and that the faith which fastened on Him shall extract from His fulness supplies commensurate with every exigency. I know that Satan shall never forge an arrow which the shield of this faith is not strong enough to throw off. I know that it is promised to the believer, not only that he shall be a 'conqueror —this were much, this were wonderful! much that the believer should subdue in battle, wonderful that in his sinfulness and his weakness he shall gain the mastery over principalities and powers; yes, this were much, this were wonderful!—but it is not only promised that he shall be a 'conqueror,' it is promised that he shall be 'more than a conqueror through Him that loved him.' I cannot grasp the promise in all the nobleness of its extent. I hardly know what that conquest is which is more than conquest. But, nevertheless, I bid you lay hold on such a promise, and may you go on your way rejoicing! It is not life; it is not death which shall separate you from the Redeemer. One lust after another being crucified, you shall stand at last on the margin of eternity, and, looking down its vista, behold not the ruins of that death which the Redeemer abolished, but the splendours of that kingdom which at His second coming He shall set up. I know that if ye have faith in Christ, through that faith ye shall die conquerors. The wing of the angel shall be over you; the whisper of the Spirit shall comfort you; the smile of the Redeemer shall beckon you. And if surviving relatives rear a monument over your ashes, they will be perfidious to your memory, they will be traitors to the truth, if they carve not on the stone, 'They overcame the world; and the victory was by faith.'

H. MELVILL.

The Faith that Overcometh the World.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John v. 5.

THE Epistle for to-day carries on, in somewhat of a subdued tone, the sublime and triumphant strain of last Sunday, but, as it were, confirming the same victory over sin and death, with even fuller knowledge and experience, by the voice of him who stood by the foot of the Cross. 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' Some of our Lord's last words to His disciples had been, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' And now, when S. John wrote this Epistle, they had found in very truth that they also in Him could do the same. It is a calm but firm tone of triumph that pervades all he now writes. To be 'born of God,' or to believe that 'Christ is the Son of God,' this our faith, exclaims the beloved disciple, this our new birth in Him from above, 'overcometh the world.' And then he proceeds to describe, not this faith as it is in us—the fruits of it, or the proofs and signs, or the means of promoting it in ourselves—but directs our eyes to Him who is the object of it, and states how in and through Him there is this power and victory.

I. From the contemplation of ourselves we are called upon at this season to look on Him who is our life and peace. We have in the gospel S. John's account of first beholding his risen Lord after he had witnessed His sufferings and death.

As the epistle for to-day is full of high and heavenly doctrine, so in like manner is the gospel. It contains the account of those mysterious gifts whereby Christ is to dwell in His Church unto the end. For the appearance of our Lord on this occasion is not to mere witnesses of His Resurrection, but, like the Last Supper, to apostles, and the imparting of a gift. It is by the power of His Resurrection, and as the first fruits of it, in the presence of other disciples, to convey, as it were, and transfer to them His own mission from the Father, of which He had so often spoken.

II. The great gift of the forgiveness of sins, which He had purchased for us by His death, and which was from henceforth to reside for ever in His Church, seems connected throughout with the lesson from the altar on this day. Such is that expression of S. John, 'This is He that came by water and blood, and the Spirit beareth witness.' And again, such is our Lord's showing them His side, from which that water and blood had flowed, and twice bestowing on them His gift of peace. And then, thus having given them His peace, He bequeaths to His Church this ministry of reconciliation; this power of the Holy Ghost for rejecting and absolving sinners, which the Church at her Ordination Service commits in the same solemn words to every one admitted by her into the order of the priesthood. These are the gifts of which the prophets speak so much; these are the living waters that were to go forth from beneath the temple of Jerusalem to the four quarters of the world. 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.' These are the keys of hell and of death, committed to Him who appears in the dress of the High Priest on the great Day of Atonement.

The epistle and gospel for this day are so full of heaven, of high truth, of deep mystery, that it would take long to unfold, a whole life to contemplate. But what is of more importance than barren speculation or study, let us ask in what is it all most realised to us in the present day and unto the end of the world; surely it is at the Holy Eucharist. There do the words of absolution fall like drops of dew on the dry heart of the penitent; there is our faith nourished in the Son of God, so that we may overcome the world; there is He that came by water and blood, inviting us by that water and blood to be made in very deed one with Himself. There is the Spirit of Truth, without which the flesh profiteth nothing. There are the Three that bear witness on earth, by which we are raised into unspeakable communion with the Three that bear record in heaven. There by faith the penitent refreshed hath the witness in himself. There he hath the Son, and he that hath the Son hath life. The sixth chapter of S. John's gospel abundantly testifies to all this.

And again, take the gospel likewise as fulfilled to us in this feast of love; it is here that the disciples are assembled on the first day of the week, and have shut the doors of their heart against the world; here Jesus stands in the midst of them gathered together in His name. It is here by His ministers He proclaims peace and forgiveness of sins; it is here that He shows unto them His hands and His side.

These are not mere figures of speech, they are not images and representations from what once took place on Easter Day, but they are all solemn truths contained in the words of Christ; and we know that heaven and earth shall pass away, like shadows of a cloud over a summer field, but His words shall not pass away.

I. WILLIAMS

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Eastertide.

Jesus said unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God, and your God. S. JOHN xx. 17.

WE shall have to comprehend two things if we wish rightly to understand and lay to heart this message. We must,

1. Attempt to understand it in the minds of those to whom it was immediately directed—the first disciples of the Lord—in order, 2. To convince ourselves how this same message affects us all.

I. What might well have been the feelings of the first disciples when they really arrived at the certainty that their Lord and Master was risen again, really arisen, was alive, and remaining near them? We all know how hard it was for them to arrive at this conviction; how the first news which they received of the Resurrection of the Master found no belief, but on the contrary increased their uneasiness. Just as much as the death of the Lord, and all which they had experienced in the last days, had diminished the elasticity of their faith; and the more happy the thought of the possibility might be, that the Lord was again gone forth victorious from death, the more anxiously they were obliged to fear deception, and scarcely dared to give place to hope.

Still at last the certainty dawned upon them, that He was alive; He appeared to them, spoke with them, ate with them—in short, they had Him again, they knew that it could be no deception; and now their souls were thoroughly transformed, for now they could be joyful, and the more so the longer and deeper their souls had been filled with pain. Certainly their only thought was, that they had the Lord again, and now also would certainly keep Him for ever. The thought that a separation could follow upon it lay far from them from the first, and the anxiety lest they should again be forcibly separated from Him whom they had again received from the power of death and the might of the grave, hardly entered their minds. Now they certainly thought, we shall be able to be quite joyful with Him, and enjoy His love completely and without distraction, and where He is with His love, there also must happiness and glory be. The old hopes with which they had come to Jesus, of a kingdom of glory which the Messiah was to bring, were again renewed in them; and if they understood these hopes in quite a different way from their carnal contemporaries, still they certainly agreed with them in the main point, that they expected the commencement of this kingdom, and the full and undisturbed enjoyment of its happiness for themselves immediately, for we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the disciples of the Lord asked expressly, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' Acts i. 6.

II. But the Lord Himself intended something quite different for the immediate future. He could not approve of these their thoughts, and therefore He seized the first opportunity, on seeing one from His own circle, to undeceive the disciples in this respect, and to communicate to them something quite different from the expected message.

He tells them, 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (S. John xx. 21). He gives them a serious and difficult commission, as they must have certainly felt. They were obliged, when they heard this commission, to remember involuntarily what He had experienced among men, and think from that, how they would be hated, delivered up, persecuted and despised, for His sake; in short, how they would share His lot. You will also be obliged to go the same way of trouble, work, and persecution as I did; that was what the Lord announced to the disciples as the fate which was standing close before them. They had hoped that now the time of their Master's glory was coming, and He says, a time of work and trouble will yet come; you cannot yet enjoy.

The Lord, now that He is risen from the dead, must again become alive for each one of us. From the nature of the matter we must experience it like the first disciples. We know that, by nature, Christ is a dead thing for all of us; He does not live in us, and therefore not for us, and we do not know at all why others should make so much noise about Him. This Christ is for us a past appearance in history, like many other men; we know nothing of a personal connection with Him. There lies Christ in the darkness of the grave. But He can rise again for us. It is to be hoped that He will do so for us, and prove Himself to us as the risen Lord. This will not happen to us as to the first disciples, amid much pain and necessity, amid much losing courage, but it will happen; a morning may dawn for us in our souls, when Jesus Christ stands before us alive, seizing our hand, in order to testify to us that He is arisen for us, to ask us whether we believe in Him and will live to Him.

The Lord withdraws from us, we are thereby admonished to walk with Him and before Him first in mere faith, and not yet by looking upon Him; He withdraws, but whither? He ascends into heaven. Now, as He is in heaven, we have also a heaven, which is destined for us, which is governed by Him, and therefore we ought to believe that He withdraws there in order to represent our interests. We ought in the first place to walk by faith only; but are we not placed in a condition to do so? have we not good reason to believe that He will take us to Himself? And now the work, the trouble? I think we shall not shrink from a noble work, it will be dearer to us than the sweetest enjoyment. It is a work in weakness, a suffering, a self-surrender, which however serves, through this self-denial, to set us free from sin: and then a work, which brings us, where we wish to penetrate immediately, into the full and untroubled communion of the Saviour, into the full enjoyment of His blessedness and glory. That is the end—we imagined that it was the beginning, the threshold of faith in Christ. That was a delusion, in which the goal, the crown for which we are striving, could never appear in all its beauty. This is better beyond comparison—first in weakness and then in glory.

We will not reflect upon this; the two things do not conflict—faith in the risen Christ in glory and a Christian life in weakness and humility go well together; and if the Christian position is to be sound, they must unite. Let that be also what we are expecting for our future.

R. ROTHE.

The Easter Gift: Peace.

Then . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. S. John xx. 19.

WHAT a wondrous prophecy of Good Friday and Easter we have in the story of our Lord stilling the tempest at sea, when His disciples awoke Him, and He said, Peace, be still; and there was a great calm (S. Mark iv. 39). The ship the type of the Cross, the Ark of the true Noah, in which He passed through the Floods. His day's work done He said, 'It is finished,' and, having commended Himself into His Father's hands, He bowed His head and slept the deep sleep of death, resting on the hard bed of the Cross, His only pillow the crown of thorns. Round Him raged the storms of the world, raised by the agency of Satan; the powers of darkness had done their worst; for a time they seemed to have triumphed. The tempted Apostles trembled at the violence of that storm, and their faith seemed to fail; but He awoke from the sleep of death, arose from the hard bed of the grave, appeared to His terrified Apostles, and said, 'Peace be unto you,' and there was a great calm, the calm of Easter, of the Resurrection life. What a contrast there is in the Gospels! the narrative of the Passion, like a great storm, and then Easter Day, and all is changed; we seem to be reading almost of another world, a great calm seems to have fallen on everything, a mysterious quiet, broken by whispers of peace; peace, the gift of Easter.

On the third Sunday in Lent we were warned against the dangers of a false peace. Let us now consider some of the characteristics of our Lord's Easter gift of true peace:

I. It must be the result of war, and war ending in victory:

1. So we find even in this world; nations which are at peace have passed through times of war, and peace has followed victory.

2. So in heaven itself; we read that once there was war, when 'Michael and his angels fought against the dragon' (Rev. xii. 7). Now all is peace.

3. So with our Lord: there was the battle of life, the struggle with temptation, the Agony in Gethsemane, the battle on Calvary by which victory was won, and then the gift, which He had purchased at so great a cost, peace. 'For He shall speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, that they turn not again' (Ps. lxxxv. 8).

4. So with ourselves: war first, then peace; for our Lord tells us, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' (S. Matt. x. 34); and again, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (S. John xvi. 33). No peace is worth having which has not been won by war. We must have our Good Friday if we are to enjoy the Easter gift.

II. It requires for its preservation constant preparation for war:

1. So we find nations now at peace contending with one another in maintaining mighty armies, and always preparing for war, because they realise that it is the only way to keep their peace.

2. So with ourselves: after we have fought the battle and won the victory, we must be vigilant and ready for other battles, knowing that thus only can we retain the peace that we have won.

III. It is an interior peace not necessarily accompanied by exterior peace also:

1. It is not immunity from struggle, but safety in it.

2. It is not freedom from the storm, but power to walk on the waves.

3. It is the foretaste of the perfect peace of heaven, as Easter is the prophecy of heaven.
4. It is the possession of Jesus, who is our peace (Eph. ii. 14).

Rev. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

The Nature of Christian Worship.

Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. S. John xx. 20.

WE suppose that the disciples who are spoken of in this passage were assembled together for purposes of worship. The time was the evening of the day of Resurrection; the place was the rough upper chamber in which their meetings were ordinarily held; and the doors were fast closed that they might be protected from any sudden outbreak of fanaticism on the part of the Jews. Earlier in the day these disciples had heard rumours to the effect that their Master had been seen alive, but to these rumours they gave no manner of credence. The thing seemed absolutely impossible. Mary Magdalene, who had brought the first report, was, they considered, the victim of some unaccountable delusion; and even the two brethren, who had just returned from their journey to Emmaus and corroborated Mary's statement by their own independent testimony, must have been strangely misled by some exceptional concurrence of circumstances to have fancied they had seen the Lord. In the midst of this obstinate incredulity the Lord Himself suddenly appears amongst them. Their first feeling, in spite of His reassuring words, is one of indescribable alarm. 'They were terrified and affrighted,' says S. Luke, 'and supposed that they had seen a spirit.' Clearly, then, the Lord must have entered the assembly in some supernatural manner, His new Resurrection life admitting of His dispensing with, or assuming at pleasure, the conditions of human existence. But He soon gave them proof that it was He Himself, and no mere spirit, that stood before them. 'Behold My hands and My feet. Handle Me and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.' And then, observing that even this evidence, in the tumult of their newly awakened feelings, was scarcely sufficient, He condescended to supply them with another test of the reality of His human nature, for He took a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb, and did eat it before them. Then at last their incredulity gave way before the force of these accumulated proofs, and the consternation with which the interview began was changed into rapturous delight at the recovery and repossession of their dearly loved Master. 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

I. First, consider the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ amongst His people. Now, we understand, of course, that the Godhead of the Saviour not only makes Him cognisant of all that is going on in every part of the universe, and therefore of all that is going on amongst us now, but that it also brings Him into actual personal contact with everything that exists. We attach to Deity the idea of omnipresence. The conception is a tremendous one; but it is unquestionably a correct one. There have been individuals—men of gigantic mental power and of untiring activity—who have contrived, by the multiplication and adjustment of skilfully-ordered agencies, to make their influence felt throughout the whole of a mighty empire, and, as it were, to be present in every part of it at the same moment of time. But presence by influence is one thing, and presence in person, another. And what we believe of the Godhead is this: that in every point of what we call ‘space,’ at the remotest star that glitters in the firmament, as well as in the church in which we are assembled now, by the side of every rebellious spirit on his dark bed of suffering, as truly as in the hearts of His faithful people, God is to be found simultaneously, in all the force of His being, and in all the plenitude of His power.

It was this conviction leading to the further conviction of the hopelessness of all attempts to escape from God, which extorted from David the well-known cry, ‘Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there.’ We, then, who believe in the true essential Godhead of the Son, have no difficulty whatever in conceiving that there is an actual personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in every assembly of His worshipping people. We can understand, for instance, His being here, and we can understand His being in a neighbouring congregation whilst He is here, and we can understand also His being at the same time in the midst of Christian gatherings in India, or in China, or in Africa, or in the uttermost parts of the sea.

The manifestation which we expect is a spiritual manifestation—mysterious, if you like; mysterious because spiritual, but actual and real—and what we believe is this, that the Saviour, present in the assemblies of His worshipping people, is ready to make His presence *felt* by them; ready to open communications with them; ready to manifest Himself to them as He is not manifested to the world; ready so to lay His gentle but powerful touch upon their spirits as that they shall feel that they have been admitted into the very audience-chamber of their Father and their God.

II. Let us pass on now to consider our second topic. Christ stands in the midst of His people for the purpose of blessing them and giving them peace. Now, of course, it will occur to you that a deep and awful solemnity would be thrown round the services of the sanctuary if we were only to realise, even to a very imperfect degree, the presence of Christ amongst us. In a special way, as we have said, and for a special purpose, the risen and glorified Saviour joins Himself as a companion and associate to the two or three who are gathered together in His name. And if so, the wandering thoughts and vain imaginations, the inattention and the lightness, the worldly preoccupation from which, I fear, the best of us are not entirely free when engaged in public worship, become matters of very serious import. They are things done under the very eye of Christ, and done, too, under circumstances in which He is expecting to receive our best from us, our truest self-consecration, our highest and noblest offerings of gratitude and love. Still, the Saviour, though conscious of course of all that is going on, does not come amongst us to find fault and to call up for judgment. He comes to bless. His language to us is the same as that which He addressed to His disciples of old, 'Peace be unto you.'

III. We come now to our third and last point—the rejoicing of the disciples at the presence of the Lord. It cannot be denied that there is a pleasure, which, I think, we may call sentimental, in the exercises of devotion. There is a kind of *religious instinct* in man which is gratified by the act of worship itself. And many and many a person takes delight in singing hymns, and praying prayers, or even, it may be, in listening to sermons, who is very far indeed from being a true follower and disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The thing is quite intelligible. There is an emotional part in our nature which may be stirred and touched quite independently of our will and our affections; and to this emotional part religious services make a very distinct and emphatic appeal. We can conceive, therefore, of a man who is resolutely devoted to the world, and who has never dreamt of making a surrender of his heart to Christ, weeping over an eloquent and elaborately-drawn description of the Redeemer's sufferings; and, on the other hand, we can conceive of another equally worldly, equally impenitent, moved almost to ecstasy by the fascinations of exquisitely rendered ecclesiastical music. In both cases it is a question of nervous sensibility, and not in any sense a question of religious principle. But the mere excitement of the emotions is not the thing which is desired by the Christian disciple. He will not, indeed, despise it, for he knows the utility of the emotions in religion; but he looks for something beyond, even for true and real communion with his divine Master. He regards the means of grace—prayer, reading and hearing the Word, the Holy Communion—as media of living communication between Himself and Christ. If they are not this, they are nothing to him. He cannot be satisfied—Spirit-taught as he is, and yearning after the personal God,—he cannot be satisfied with looking up into the majestic, loving face and winning no smile in return; with walking side by side with the divine Companion, himself speaking, pleading, beseeching, expostulating, or uttering words of devout and loyal adoration, and yet never obtaining a single response. And so he expects communication—spiritual, if you like, but not the less real; only the more real because it is spiritual. And he *does* get it, or, at least, he may get it. In prayer and praise he may be conscious that he is not speaking into the air, not engaged in a fantastic exercise of which the sole result is the benefit which accrues from it to his own spiritual character, but that he is addressing Some One who hears and Some One who is pleased to hear. In the reading of the Word, taking it as a message to himself, he may feel (at least occasionally) the very beat of the loving heart of Christ; and when he approaches the Holy Table—although there are times, it may be, when he is conscious only of the fulfilment of a sacred duty, yet there may be others, when he feels the bonds of vital union more closely drawn, and realises the presence and the love of Him who loved him and gave Himself for him.

And let us consider this also, that at the bases and foundation of all true public worship lies private prayer, secret communion with God. If we know nothing of private prayer, our public devotions are hollow and unreal. We cannot expect to find Christ in them. There are just three stages in this matter of worship. The school of private prayer prepares us for worship at the family altar; and I cannot, can you, conceive of a Christian family without family prayer. And family prayer in its turn prepares us for the worship of the sanctuary. We cannot rise to the last without passing through the two preparatory stages; and the worship of the sanctuary, with its feeling of fellowship and its many noble spiritual impulses, prepares us for the services of the future Kingdom, fits us for joining, when our time comes, in the rapturous adoration of the multitude before the Throne, who ascribe glory and honour, and blessing and power, to Him that sitteth upon it, for ever and ever.

G. CALTHROP.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Unbelief of S. Thomas.

S. JOHN XX. 19-31.

FIRM faith in the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour is an essentially important feature of our general belief in Christ, for thereupon depends our assurance of the forgiveness of sins and our faith in a living Saviour. It was to this end that our Lord so evidently took special pains to convince His disciples of the great truth of His Resurrection, and for the same reason the Evangelists have left us in their records the fullest information regarding that event and the surrounding circumstances of the times. These records merit our deepest attention, for they can guide us to a true faith in our risen Lord. Let us, then, in pursuance of this object, and feeling the weighty importance of our subject, draw near and meditate together upon that particular part of the story of the Resurrection related in the Gospel for this day. We shall take for our contemplation,

The disciple Thomas and his slowness to believe, dividing the subject into three several parts—

First, Thomas himself; second, his unbelief; and third, the way in which our Lord acted towards him.

I. Hitherto we have met with Thomas upon only two occasions in the Gospel history (namely, in S. John xi. 16, and xiv. 5). What upon these occasions have been the characteristics of this disciple? First of all, fervent love to Jesus, a love which had remained unshaken up to the time of which we speak, which even the sufferings and death of his Lord had not been able to cool. But his faith had received many a violent shock from the scenes he had witnessed. That enduring love makes us very hopeful of Thomas; but it is a rare thing to find faithless hearts still loving their Lord; on the contrary, where there is no faith, there is generally indifference, if not direct enmity, the saddest and worst of all.

The second characteristic notable in S. Thomas is, the clearness and sharpness of his understanding, accompanied by a determination to have a keen insight into things. These, too, are points very seldom found amongst those who do not believe, and we need not fear for Thomas on account of them. With the greater proportion of unbelievers this inclination to doubt is one to which only noble natures are liable, for doubts about Christ cannot find a place in their hearts without some degree of true love for Him being there too.

II. Can such a character as that which we have just described be fairly accused of unbelief? Our Lord Himself calls the behaviour of

Thomas faithless (ver. 27). We dare not therefore attempt to excuse him, for our Lord was never unjustly severe upon His followers.

Unbelieving Thomas certainly was; but that we may not do him injustice in so speaking of him let us not omit to notice certain points in his history. The other disciples had, like him, been faithless until they actually saw the Lord, and had been rebuked by Him for their unbelief; or, as S. Mark writes in his gospel (xvi. 14), 'He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.' And it is thus that the most faithful are first brought to believe, after a period of doubting.

Seeing that Thomas was anxious and willing to believe, what was it that stood in his way? In the first place, he had probably been led to doubt by having had his hopes deceived in consequence of his credulity (not indeed respecting Christ and His words, but) respecting the prejudices and errors of his time, and of his own earth-bound heart. It had been so more or less with all the disciples.

For the future Thomas determined to make himself more sure of things, and he began to regulate his opinions and behaviour according to the why and wherefore of his own conviction, imagining that he knew himself and his nature best, while he held firmly to his own notions, which he prescribed as a rule for his Master. Out of this arose a new caprice—namely, his separating himself entirely from the other disciples, and shutting himself up against them.

These are the hindrances which block up the way of faith against Thomas and souls like his. And from what source did all these hindrances flow in the case of Thomas? To all appearance, they proceeded from his keen understanding. But that were indeed a strange use to make of a great gift. No, the real source lay deeper than that—it lay in his yet unbroken heart of pride, in his want of humility, in his self-will. His pride was taking pleasure (even while it gave him pain) in the feeling of its own forlorn state, and in the consciousness of a vain but agreeable struggle with the overpowering strength of fate. This is always the real source of non-ability to believe in the class of minds that we have been describing, so ready are they to talk themselves into believing that their keen understanding is the cause of their doubts—nay, they put their intellect in the place of their faith.

III. Our interest is now excited to learn how the Lord acted towards the faithless Thomas, for He will not give any one of us up while there is hope of us, certainly not one of this class of unbelievers. We see in our Lord's conduct on this occasion an equal measure of divine severity and of condescending love flowing out of His inmost knowledge of hearts. He showed Himself in a special manner to Thomas, directed his attention to the very thing which he in his wilfulness had made a condition of his faith, thereby proving that He knew His disciple's inmost heart, and rebuked his unbelief with holy sternness (ver. 27).

The result of this second appearance of our Lord was more remarkable and decisive than had been that of His first showing Himself to His disciples (S. John xx. 20; S. Luke xxiv. 41), as is often the case with those who, having been hard to convince, when they are brought to believe, are impressed in the most overwhelmingly powerful manner, and are ready to exclaim with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God!' Now his keen, clear understanding stood him in good stead; now he felt in his inmost soul what his Saviour was, how much he possessed in Him.

In such circumstances as those we have been describing, it is absolutely necessary for us that there should be a deeply-rooted conviction of our former errors, a clear insight into the peculiar nature of faith, as faith without sight, and especially a knowledge of the wondrous glory and blessedness of such a faith, whilst the heart must be drawn more and more closely to God, and the bonds of love and confidence in Him be strengthened and riveted. All this is needful, doubly needful, before the old damage can be repaired and the true faith surely and firmly grounded. All this our Lord now accomplished through the earnestness and love of Thomas towards Himself (ver. 29).

R. ROTHE.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Priesthood.

Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? Numbers xvi. 3.

I. THIS assertion was strictly true. Every one of the congregation was holy—*i.e.* separated to the service of God from all other people (Exod. xix. 6, Levit. xx. 24). The Lord, too, was amongst them, as He said, 'I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I will be their God' (Exod. xxix. 45).

But though they (the rebels) spake what was quite true, they drew a totally wrong inference from it. Because all the children of Israel, all the congregation was holy, they drew the inference that there were to be no priests among them—none to stand between the Lord and the people to offer to God on behalf of the people.

Now the very same God who had separated all the people to be holy to Himself, and had made them a kingdom of priests as well as a holy nation, had separated one tribe to minister to Himself, and one family of that tribe, the family of Aaron, to be priests in a sense that no other Israelites were, and to perform functions of worship which no other Israelites could perform.

II. Now the same thing has taken place in Christian times, and by Christ's own appointment. He separated twelve men from the whole body of His disciples, and put a very great difference between them and His ordinary disciples. To these twelve, and these only, He said, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' To these only He said, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them.' And He promised to be with them to the end of the world, so that the Church has always held that they live in their successors. Just, then, as the common priesthood of all the Jews did not prevent God ordaining a particular priesthood, so the common priesthood of all Christians does not undo the fact that there is an Apostolical ministry ordained more directly to represent Christ to His people. Let us then devoutly use the functions of His ministry, looking to the action of Christ in each case, giving all glory to Him alone, and we cannot be wrong. We must ask Him to enable us rightly to honour His ordinance, and He will hear our prayer.

M. F. SADLER.

The Claims of Christianity.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. S. John i. 29.

These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. S. John xx. 30, 31.

WE may fitly combine these two declarations, by which Christ's earthly ministry was heralded and closed, as laying down the two main principles which form the practical groundwork of Christianity: the remission of sin, and everlasting life. The Baptist, looking forward to the work which the Lamb of God was to accomplish, tells us that He came to take away the sin of the world. The Evangelist, looking back over that career, of which he had been allowed to be so close a witness, tells us that his object in recording its history was to induce men to believe in Christ, 'that believing ye might have life through His name.' Purification from the dark stains of sin contracted in the past, and the assurance of an eternal life of service in the future, these are the fundamental promises held out by Christianity for the salvation and recovery of men. They are the offers by the reality of which its value must be tested. They are the practical conditions which define the place which it claims to hold in the regeneration of the world.

We are frequently reminded that while Christians are too often contending among themselves on matters of small moment, a dangerous enemy is threatening our gates, and Christianity itself, I might almost say religion itself, is now upon its trial. In days when every kind of institution is summoned to give an account of itself, and to defend its existence, we could scarcely expect that even the most sacred and venerable should be exempted from the ordeal. But while we are ready to accept the position without misgiving, and to meet the attack with patience, readiness, and candour, it is our duty as well as our right, to stipulate that the trial shall be fair. Try Christianity by all means, we say; but try it on the grounds of its own claims and its own definitions; not by some imaginary standard which its professors would reject, but by its own account of the object it proposes, and by its own explanation of its methods, its sanctions, and its powers. Try it also, let me add, on its own merits, and not in the light of the many faults and shortcomings of its adherents. This is surely one of the plainest and simplest rules of justice. But, unfortunately, it is still necessary to insist upon it, because it is so frequently forgotten.

To make a trial fair, it is obviously indispensable that an exact account shall be taken of the object proposed by the system tested, as well as the ground of its claims and the laws of its working. We must first ask whether the object is a good one. We must next inquire whether the means used are well adapted to secure their purpose, and whether it has been practically found that they can be worked with success. We are expected to act on this rule when individuals are concerned; and equal justice demands that it should be applied as carefully to systems. It is one of our own most familiar maxims in philosophy, that each question must be judged according to its own subject-matter; and that a person who is ignorant of that subject-matter is for that very reason disqualified to judge.

What is the most characteristic account of Christianity, by which its supporters may demand that its pretensions shall be tried? The Evangelist supplies us with a sufficient answer in the passages which I have joined together as the text. It is a system which aims at the remission of sins, through the means of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as a preparation for the life of eternity. It is a method designed by the divine wisdom, and carried out through a supreme divine sacrifice, to bring all men back under the moral standard of exalted purity, brightened by a heavenly hope, though its progress is retarded by the opposition of a great antagonistic force, which struggles to retain men under the bondage of its sensual power.

There are other great results, indeed, which Christianity achieves in practice. We believe, for example, that revelation presents us with a theory of unrivalled range and completeness, by which we are carried as far as our limited faculties will enable us to go, towards a comprehension of the mysterious secret of the source of creation and providence—a secret which science declares itself unable to unfold. We believe that there is not a single element in any true and pure civilisation which Christianity has not been forward to promote and foster. But no fair reasoner would propose to measure the value of Christianity by either a scientific or an æsthetic standard. It is only just that the special trial of Christianity should turn on the special claims of Christianity. Those special claims, I repeat, are founded on the remission of sins, and the promise of eternal life through faith in Christ.

I. When Christianity was first proclaimed, the world was well-nigh lost in sin. The noblest cultivation, and the most perfect art, and a skill in law and government which has never been surpassed, were unhappily found to be compatible with a baseness of moral degradation, the very language of which, by God's mercy, has now become obsolete and unknown. But long before those days, the mere mind of man had achieved some of its most surpassing triumphs. The finest mental gifts had been developed through the most perfect organisations, in the midst of the fairest conditions of external nature, and with the additional advantages conferred by the bright freshness of the opening world. The result was a smooth and polished surface, which concealed depths of unutterable depravity; a brilliant intelligence, and the most perfect taste, combined with the pollution of the lowest sensual sins. Mere mind had already been allowed its trial. It had been tested and proved under the most favourable conditions. It had been found utterly wanting in the deeper qualities of the spiritual or religious life. Now, the Gospel revelation rests upon the principle that the removal of this weight and stain of moral evil was the first requisite for the restoration of that higher life, and that no cure could be found for the deeply-seated mischief, except through the renewed contact of God Himself with human nature: God Himself condescending to assume that nature, with the express purpose of winning back the fallen world to purity and holiness.

If the origin of evil is the chief of speculative perplexities, the greatest and most appalling of all practical difficulties is still the pressure of that evil in the form of sin. This is the one chief hindrance that confronts us, in every effort for the elevation of our race. How are we to deal with it? How are we to repress the sinful impulses of every heart? How are we to treat the fallen and degraded masses, which offer so discouraging a problem to all who are interested in the great cause of moral and social improvement? How are we to put to shame that vilest incarnation of selfishness, which strews its paths with moral ruins, and thinks it a light thing to gratify a gross and transient passion, at the cost of destroying an immortal soul? Experience has thoroughly established the answer, that the only possible method of working out these moral miracles is by the infusion of fresh power and grace from the divine source of purity and holiness. It is only too clear that earth alone provides no cure for its own sad evils. We must seek for the remedy direct from heaven.

II. It was the further object of the work of Christ that a higher life might be created through faith in His name. We must pass on from the removal of the hindrances by which man was fettered, to recognise the larger capabilities that were infused through the regenerate life. By the atonement of Christ the strength of sin was virtually broken; but the way was thereby opened for the development of nobler freedom. The new man was to be created afresh, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and thus he was to be brought back to that likeness of God's image which he had all but lost, through long centuries of alienation and sin. Being made free from sin, he was now to become the servant of righteousness. We find, then, a further and most important element in that account of Christianity, by which its worth ought to be tested in the fulness of the fruits which it was meant to realise through the new spiritual life, and through the prospect of that eternity on which it is based, by which it is encompassed, in which it will finally be made complete. We find it in the humility with which the Christian is enjoined to strive to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; in the energy with which he is encouraged to set himself to the work of perfecting every faculty in his own character, so far as it is trusted to his hands; in the devotion with which he must surrender himself to the paramount duty of promoting the welfare of his brethren and the glory of God. The power of our new birth must extend itself through all the faculties, endowments, gifts, and talents which go to make up the rich treasury of human nature. They are all God's gifts, as we are all God's workmanship. They are gifts which He meant us to use with all diligence, so as to make that workmanship complete. They are gifts which He bestowed on us, both for the increase of our own happiness and that of our fellow-men, and for the furtherance of His glory. We are bound to neglect no single faculty which He has lent us for this twofold end. The most secular knowledge finds a use in religion, and may be regarded under a religious aspect, if it enlarges and heightens those mental powers which will be employed hereafter on nobler objects in a brighter world. The most secular business possesses a religious side if we let it strengthen and improve the practical faculties which will find a worthier use in that eternal service. There is not a single talent or endowment which may not be raised to a higher level, and invested with a nobler character, if it is cultivated in a religious temper for religious ends.

III. Our estimate of the measure in which this ideal is fulfilled must be formed from the completeness with which these various duties are acknowledged and provided for, completeness being a fair and reasonable test of any theory of life and conduct. When various schemes of life are laid before us, we are justified in asking, not only which is most lucid, which is most philosophical, which is most rich and fertile in results—though under all these heads we are ready to meet the inquiry with confidence—but above all things we should ask, which system is most certain to cover the whole field, to account for all the facts, to absorb into one current all the minor streams of movement? Which system offers the most complete and adequate employment for all the faculties of our compound nature, alike for body, soul, and spirit? If the touchstone of truth is the fulness with which the conditions of a problem are complied with, that test, in regard to conduct, is most adequately satisfied by the religious character, by the religious temper. No one could call us unfair for asserting, that the light of science, however pure and brilliant, cannot save a man's soul in the day of his trial; cannot lay a bridle on those headstrong passions, which are so eager and urgent to hurry us to sin; cannot guarantee that spiritual and eternal life, which stands solely in the knowledge of God. These things belong to the province which is subject only to the Cross of our Redeemer; the province of the troubled spirit and the broken, contrite heart; the proper home of prayer and humiliation; of those secret, silent aspirations of the soul which are heard and assisted by the Spirit of the Lord. To secure that help, to escape those dangers, the most instructed student must kneel in prayer, as simply as the humblest and least cultivated of his Christian brethren. Both alike, when humbled by the sense of their weakness, must be content to seek strength and safety in the faith of Christ, and in the assurance that there is none other name under heaven given among men 'whereby we must be saved,' alike for time and eternity.

ARCHDEACON HANNAH.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

For Easter.

If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. 1 CORINTHIANS xv. 17.

I. IS it boldness or foolhardiness to hazard religion upon such a claim?

Upon what does our hope of future life depend? Ordinarily the question does not press hardly. This life can keep the energies so employed.

But sometimes:

A transient resemblance to one 'loved long since.' A twinge of pain which bodes death. A still hour. Always at Easter we are set to face the question. In plain words, why do we expect immortality? A great preacher has set out the usual answers somewhat thus:

1. 'Men have always believed it.'

This is not true. One here and there has suspected it, and that is all: For example, Job, Plato, M. Aurelius. Hercules brings back Alcestis, but Theseus trying to rescue Proserpine is fastened to a rock for ever. In every case they only looked for existence a little prolonged. It is not believed outside of Christendom now. But suppose it always had been believed: truth is not found by a plebiscite.

2. 'It is an instinctive yearning of the soul.'

So is the yearning for ease, wealth, health, love, etc., but the yearning is no proof of its ultimate gratification.

3. 'There is clear evidence of it in nature.'

E.g. Sleep and waking; winter and spring; caterpillar and butterfly, etc. These all lack the differentiating quality of a resurrection; not true analogies.

II. What is demanded is a concrete instance.

This lacking, all the foregoing are valueless; this being supplied, they return with redoubled power. (They serve for approaches, but God only can build the bridge.) S. Paul clearly recognises the unique value of the fact of Christ's Resurrection. (*Text.*) [1. It has been believed so long and by such men, that the burden of proof is now upon those who would reject it. 2. The short and easy method of putting it to one side, as 'outside nature,' and therefore essentially incredible, will not do until all the secrets of nature in all times shall have been examined.]

III. But one step is still to be taken; suppose He did rise, why should we?

Observe the teaching of Scripture as to the relation of Christ to humanity—the way He is identified with it. [‘Son of Man.’ ‘The Word was made Flesh.’ ‘The first man Adam was made a living soul, the second man a life-giving Spirit.’]

All attempt to emasculate Christianity of its supernatural quality breaks down before this text.

Our fortunes are bound up with His.

S. D. M‘CONNELL.

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Blessing of Peace.

The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace. Psalm xxix. 10. (*P.B.V.*)

THE Psalmist has been describing one of those terrible storms which sometimes sweep over the whole length of Palestine, from Lebanon and Sirion, even to the wilderness of Kadesh—when, suddenly breaking off in his powerful description, by a transition as beautiful as it is sudden, he draws for his hearers a lesson of comfort and of peace. And so while at one moment we seem to hear the very noise of the warring elements in such words as, ‘It is the glorious God that maketh the thunder . . . the voice of the Lord is mighty in operation, the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar trees . . . the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, yea the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Cades’—the next moment there comes, like a gentle whisper from Heaven, to soothe and reassure us, ‘The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.’

I. Of all the blessings (and they are very many) which the good God so freely bestows upon us His children, there are few more to be desired than peace. ‘Peace,’ says one, ‘is God’s own child.’ And therefore the Son of God, at that solemn moment, when, His earthly work finished, He was soon to return to His Father’s throne—and when, being about to leave His little flock to enter upon the great struggle between good and evil in the world, which must continue while time shall last, He had prayed, not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil—leaves with them, as a legacy to sustain them in all dangers and to carry them through all temptations, His own peace. ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.’

And again, when Easter brightness has chased away the gloom of Calvary, we hear the threefold benediction uttered, 'Peace be unto you!'

As long as the world shall continue to disappoint those who have most trusted it, as long as the joys of earth shall continue to prove but fleeting, as long as the sweets of earth shall continue to turn to gall and bitterness, when fulness has succeeded freshness, so long shall man with his unreasonable soul, and the germ of immortality within him, continue to yearn for something more than the last excitement and the latest novelty; something more solid and enduring which shall satisfy the hunger of the soul; something which he looks for in vain in the world and worldly pursuits, for the simple reason that the world cannot give it.

A mind at rest, quiet of conscience, peace at the last, these are not the world's to give. And in the hour of trial, or in moments of solemn thought, awakened by the changing seasons, the setting stars, the falling leaves, the approach of winter, the death of friends, when we turn to the world for comfort, the world meets us with a cold philosophy which chills our very souls.

II. What the world offers is to what God offers 'what the wayside pool which to-day's rain has created and which to-morrow's wind and sun will evaporate, is to the boundless sweep and the solemn mystery of the eternal sea!'

But we may thank God that although we are inclined to think sometimes, when life is very dark, when the burden laid upon us seems greater than we can bear, that true peace is the prize of those alone whose warfare is accomplished—the blessed resting dead; yet God promises and God gives to toil-worn, sin-laden men and women, even in this life, real, lasting peace. 'Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.' The mind, that is, of one who is dead to the world (not to its duties and its lawful claims, but to its allurements and attractions), and whose 'life is hid with Christ in God,' whose life is a hearty striving to do the Will of God—of patient endurance, of cheerful acceptance of the bitter with the sweet, of calm, strong love and trust,

'That One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best.'

The life in which is the blessed sense of entire self-surrender to God, this is the life which knows 'the blessing of peace,' a peace which nothing in this world can disturb, so still, so deep, so settled is it.

J. B. C. MURPHY.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Right Petitions heard by God.

And this is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us. 1 S. John v. 14.

TO those that know their own weakness and the power of temptation the question how we shall be enabled to overcome the world is one of supreme importance. It appears in the fourth verse of this chapter that we have a twofold answer to the question. We are told, in the first place, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'; and then that 'whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.' Now, we have in this answer not so much a reference to two distinct things as to two different aspects of the same thing—namely, a reference to the fact that our divine life must be given by God and taken by faith. The power by which we overcome the world is the divine life which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ; but in order to our obtaining that life two conditions must be generally fulfilled. First, as I have said, God must give it, and, secondly, we must take it.

I. First, and most obviously, God must give it, for although there may be many things that we could earn or produce for ourselves, obviously there is one thing which we could neither earn nor create, into which, it is plain, we must be born. That is, our life. Now, this is true of all life, whether the life that we possess by nature or the life that we possess by grace. Nevertheless, respecting the divine life which is in Christ Jesus a further affirmation must needs be made. It must not only be given us by God, but it must be taken through our faith. And this arises from the very nature of spiritual things, for, when God is said to have made us free and responsible creatures, He is said, in effect, to have ordained that our obedience should be of a certain quality: that it should not be that of the world—unconscious and constrained, nor that of the beasts—unconscious and instinctive, but that of the holy angels—the voluntary obedience of a free and virtuous choice.

Seeing then that this is so, if any of us find difficulties and moral perplexities in pondering the ways of God, let us set those perplexities in the light of this truth, and they will be seen to vanish away; for if any man should urge that God ought never to have permitted us to sin, or that, at the least, if we did sin and fall, God should force us to receive His grace, that would be to cause the Almighty to shut the door upon the rich and endless development of moral existence, and to undo that gracious act whereby He ordained that man should be created after His own image and similitude. Seeing, then, that this is essentially and eternally impossible, it remains that if we would gain possession of the divine life in Christ it must not only be given us by God but it must be taken by our faith.

Here, then, there arises the most important question which one human being can possibly put to another. If the Gospel be more than philosophy, more than ethics, more than a law, more than an example—if it be a life, if it be a divine eternal life in the power of which we frail mortal creatures can overcome sorrow and sin and death, then the question becomes of urgent and supreme importance, 'Can I obtain that gift whenever I please to seek it?' Now, remember, I pointed out that the possession of this gift depends upon two, and only upon two, conditions: that God should give it and we should take it. Well then, if any man says he does not possess this life, it must be because either of these conditions is unfulfilled. Can it be that the first is? Can it be that God is unwilling to give us life? That is contradicted by the very words of our passage, for we read, not that God will give us life, but that God has given us the life that is in His Son. And to the same effect says the great Apostle of the Gentiles. 'God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' And in the power of this already effected reconciliation He has sent forth us the ambassadors of His mercy to beseech you all that ye be reconciled to God. If, then, of these two conditions one be already fulfilled, then if there be any man who does not possess the life of Christ, it must needs be because he has not taken by faith the life which God has freely given to him. I say to thee, brother in Christ, and brother in infirmity, if thou wilt ask the Lord Jesus for the great gift of life He will bestow it upon thee according to that blessed assurance, 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name, believing, ye shall receive.'

'What,' you may say, 'may I expect any desire of mine to be fulfilled, though it arise from my ignorance or my sinfulness, if only I make mention of Christ in my prayer, and work myself up to a fanatical expectation that what I thus ask God must and will give me?' Nothing could be more untrue, for there is with that fanatical expectation absolutely nothing in common with Christian faith, for Christian faith, as a principle of life, is that which, feeling its absolute dependence upon God, trusts that its prayer will be answered, not because of its merit, nor because of the fervency of its utterance, but simply because of the love and promise of God. Faith expects, not because she deserves or desires, but simply because she has asked according to God's will; and she believes on the authority of our text that whatever we ask according to His will He will grant us.

II. But now, what is meant by asking according to God's will? We must make both the matter and the spirit of our prayers correspond to His will. We must ask first in the right spirit, and then for the right thing.

First, we must ask in the right spirit. We must, as the Apostle says, lift up holy hands. In the hands of supplication which we raise to heaven there must be found no sinful and inordinate desires, for if our hands be filled with the dross of earth what room were there for the treasure that abideth? Have you fulfilled that condition? Are you asking in the spirit of holiness? Have you such a hatred of sin that you could pray to God, if need were, that by any means, at any cost or sacrifice to you, God would purge out of you the foul thing that is your bane? Can you take the evil thing in both hands of your faith, and cast it from you with all the energy of your spirit, once and for ever? Then if you can, you have fulfilled the first condition: you have come to God asking in the right spirit; and if you will only fulfil the second—if you will ask the right thing—not all the power in heaven and earth can prevent you from gaining what you seek.

'The right thing.' But where shall I find what is the right thing? If you ask that question earnestly, surely the answer is plain. You will find what is according to God's will—what you not only may expect, but unless you would doubt God's word, must expect, to receive—in the pages of His holy Word. Lord Clive, we are told, once when he was in India was taken into a vaulted chamber which was filled from end to end with all kinds of treasure: there were heaps of gold, heaps of silver, heaps of precious trinkets, heaps of jewels; and he was told by the native ruler of Bengal to take as much as he pleased. And recalling that incident of his life it is said that he exclaimed, 'I am amazed at my own moderation.' Now the Bible is God's treasure-house, filled from end to end with eternal jewels, and you are bidden, without exercising any moderation, to take as many of the richest and rarest as you please, 'without money and without price.'

The way to God's mercy-seat is open for us all; and if any of you will leave all creatures, counting them, beside Christ, as the clods of the earth or the dust in the balance; if you will press inward through all forms and veils, through all dogmas and words and sacraments, to God's most holy and most secret place—then, like the great father of Israel, you shall find the divine mysterious presence passing into your solitude and giving itself to your grasp; and then you shall not only believe but also know the being of the Father whom you have found, the power of the blood which you have pleaded, and the reality of the life with which you are filled. Only take God at His word; only come to His mercy-seat in faith, pleading the name of

His Son, asking for the things that He has promised; and, whatever the multitude may think or say, you shall learn to your everlasting joy that 'this is,' indeed, 'the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

BISHOP MOORHOUSE.

The Triumphs of the Man of War.

The Lord is a man of war; Jehovah is His name. EXODUS xv. 3.

THESE words form a part of the first great outburst of national poetry. They would be interesting to us if we merely regarded them as describing the emotions of a nation set free from oppression, misery, unjust cruel tyranny. They speak the first words of exulting life, of newly felt national life, which always must be an enkindling thought to man; and yet again, we know that these words are the outburst of the national song, the first song of the nation which God chose into peculiar relations with Himself. It is the first outbreak of the triumphant song of God's chosen people, when they, by God's strength, escaped from the tyranny of Egypt, and found themselves a delivered, a redeemed, a free people. And yet again we find this song more or less incorporated in some of the later psalms and forming a part of the service of this chosen people. We find it without mistake, I think, in the 118th Psalm, the psalm which was first rehearsed, probably, when they kept the passover after the return from the captivity, at the dedication of the second temple when priests and Levites cleansed themselves again from the pollutions of the nations, and when they had returned from an exile and from a bondage which seemed to have broken them up. We find words quoted from this first national triumphant song. 'Jehovah I cried to, out of the straight paths; Jehovah answered me in the open way: Jehovah is my strength and my song: He is become my salvation.' And yet again we find this psalm forming part, probably, of the service of the yearly passover in after years. It formed part of that series of psalms known as the 'Hallel,' or praise psalms, from the 113th to the 118th; so that this first national song was taken up in later years by the chosen people and constantly used by them to remind them of God's redeeming love. And so for us Christians there is yet a further interest, for it seems to be most probable that it was the latter part, at least, of these psalms, the 117th and 118th, quoting this psalm of Moses, which our own Redeemer, the Captain of our own salvation, must have sung when He kept the last passover before He suffered; and yet once more we find this psalm of Moses is spoken of in the Book of Revelation as being that which in some sense or other will be on the lips of the redeemed who finally shall conquer by the blood of the Lamb. And so we know that in our own Church these words are given to us to express our exulting joy when we are keeping our Easter festival. It may not be then out of harmony with our thought to-day to look for a moment at this great triumphant song and gather from it some thoughts.

We can see, then, in a moment that this great song breaks itself into three great pieces, and each section begins with an act of praise. 'I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously, for He is gloriously glorious. The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation' or glorify Him—'my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name.' Then follows, you know, the history of the overthrow of the tyrant's chariots—how his princes in their mail fell into the water—how one and all were overthrown and sank to the bottom like a stone. Then the second portion takes it up with an act of praise again. 'Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.' Then follows a fuller description of this overthrow, declaring the malignity of the pursuers who were bent on destruction. 'The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.' And then comes the mighty acknowledgment of Jehovah's power. 'Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.' One can see in these two sections two great points. The sections begin with an act of praise, and I would that we could be more wise in strengthening our souls by acts of faithful praise, acts not simply of petition, acts not merely which will bring something, as it were, to us, but if we are to follow in the footsteps of the conquerors of old we must learn not only selfishly to be petitioning from God, but we must render to Him acts of praise as victorious kings under Him. And then again one sees this, how entirely all the praise is given to the Lord. Not by my bow, not by any might or skill, not by any distinct generalship on the part of the leaders of Israel, but entirely is the praise given to Jehovah. Jehovah is a man of war. He it is who led Israel to victory. And then if we take the third section of this great song it opens again with an act of praise. 'Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness?' Well might Israel say, 'Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods?' delivered as they had been from Egypt with all the great system of deities there none of whom had been able to retain God's chosen people. Then the song passes on and rises to a triumphant description, and passes simply from narrating the description of the overthrow of the enemy to speak of this victory as being a pledge of greater victories to come. It passes to a prophetic strain. 'The people shall hear and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm, they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over.' Surely here we have a clear outburst of prophetic song, speaking not simply of the victory which then was accomplished, but seeing in the future Palestina, Edom, Moab, Canaan, falling before the power of the man of war. It is evident here that God granted a vision of the future, as He can so easily grant. Any one who has reflected seriously on the cause of the rest of God on the Sabbath day may have asked himself, 'Did God rest on the Sabbath from exhaustion or did He rest from a satisfied will? If He rested from exhaustion He is no God for me: if He rested not from exhaustion but with a reserve of power and a reserve of knowledge, then He rested simply from a satisfied will; and a supernatural knowledge and a supernatural power remain unexpressed, untold, in the forces of creation.' Most easy for God who rested on His first Sabbath and rested not from exhaustion but because His creative will was satisfied —most easy is it to sketch out and impart knowledge to the leaders of His chosen people, how they should lead them and how one after another their enemies should fall before the sword of His chosen band. And yet that is not the end of this song. It rises higher than that. It is not merely the conquest of Canaan but the end with the crowning result of that conquest, the settlement of the people in the Lord's land, in the place which He had promised, in the land which He had selected for His sanctuary. 'Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever.' There is the reaching forward beyond simply the immediate conquest of the land of Canaan, the settlement of His people and the building of the sanctuary on the mount, and the inhabitation by the Lord Himself and the dwelling among His people.

If such is a simple outline of this first great national song of God's chosen people, if we see how they cherished the memory of it and interwove its words with their yearly feast, if it was sung, probably, by the Captain of our own salvation, and if it is given to us for our meditation in this our paschal season, then the question practically comes, 'In what sense can we say that the Lord is winning victories for us as He won them for the Church of old?' It is to this point that I desire to offer to you my remarks simply to-night. You have heard in this your great Cathedral, you have heard in different ways how the Lord has continued to exercise His triumphant power in the Christian world, how with advanced civilisation Christianity has stood the test of science, and how it has done battle and prospered. I desire, as in the presence of God, to speak to you as an honest man, and, by God's mercy, as a priest of God whose privilege it has been to deal with simple souls; and the contribution which I desire to offer to you is simply this—the testimony which I can give of God's continuing power and triumphant power with the individual souls of Christians now—in other words, to say that the standard of spiritual life in individual Christians warrants the expectations which have been awakened by the first promises of the gospel. People hardly know what spiritual progress is being made among simple people of whom the world knows not; people little know how really the renewed efforts of spiritual life in the Church are producing a very discernible effect,—it may be slowly, it may be after long delay, it may be, in some instances, with uncertain steps at times, but yet it is most assuredly true that there are many in the Church of England now who are tracking out again the footprints of the saints and following them up by God's help high on the everlasting hills. It is possible to look at this in two or three aspects.

I. First I would say this, the thought seems to be valuable as giving in its degree a proof of the truth of Holy Writ. I mean that the moral expectations raised by our Lord's first sermon on the Mount are being actually realised in many separate souls now. Let us glance at it in detail. He tells us there that it will not be enough for Him that we keep the rough setting of the commandments such as Israel's rebellious ears required to be written: He tells us we must not only keep from actual shedding of blood, but that anger without a cause will be guilty in His sight. There are many souls who keep not only from deeds of violence, but who keep from the wrong use of anger, who check a quick, a peevish, a sarcastic spirit, who check a dull, sullen, morose silence, who check these tendencies of a wrong temper in its spring, and keep the word of the Lord. And, further, there are many who not only check the wrong use of anger, but they so control the passion that they cherish the right use of it as a weapon given them from the Lord. Take again the purity which He demands under the old rough setting of the seventh commandment: a look followed by a will shall be enough to defile the soul. There are many, God be praised, who not only keep themselves clean from all violations of this commandment in acts but even in wilful thought, who keep their souls so pure that there is scarcely, from time to time, an assent of the will with the wrong wandering look. It is true—it is true in the souls of many individuals—that this high standard of inward purity put forward by the Saviour in His Sermon on the Mount is really realised. One look by them is considered to be something to repent of. Take again His law on swearing. There again not only no oath but no word of roughness. Take again His warning on revenge, not only no retaliation, but no assertion of right, no spirit of pride. Vanity, conceit, all rooted out. Thoughts of disparagement, thoughts of comparison, thoughts of self-complacency, even thoughts of self-consciousness, being a grief to souls illuminated by the Spirit of Christ. It is practically working true. Take again the order for love—to love our enemies and not simply our friends. It is true. Not only are people loving without partiality but they are more and more giving themselves to works of mercy, giving themselves to tending the sick, giving themselves to minister to the dying, to the poor, to those who never can requite them, to those who would be to them an aversion according to the mere feelings of their own natural sensitiveness. We see this law carried out more and more. Take His law of alms, of charity. What frequent charity, what large, what unostentatious charity, may be noted constantly among us! Again, take the Saviour's rule of prayer. How clear it is that the demand for more frequent opportunities of public worship, that the demand for more frequent celebration of the Holy Eucharist, that the more regular attendance, that the greater reverence at this mysterious rite,—all speak of an increased deepening in the power of devotion and prayer! Take, again, in private the frequent exercise of meditation. How many souls there are now who refresh themselves in secret with this mental prayer and communion with God! It is getting more and more true year by year—God be thanked, we can recognise it—that men sympathise with the character of Him who spent whole nights in prayer. Take, again, the rule of fasting. The time of penitence through which we have just passed is better kept year by year. There seems a deal to be done if we would do as other nations do. There seems to be a deal to be done before we can reach, practically, in all classes, the degree of self-denying and fasting which is attainable, I believe. In these several points, practically, we are now finding that we can take the Sermon on the Mount as something to guide our lives by, something as a standard by which we can live. That seems to me to be a point of gratitude. Then, again, if one takes this thought not simply as giving proof to the practical reality of Holy Writ, we may take it as showing that the teaching of our Church in holy baptism is also practically true. There, when every child is baptized, we pray that the old man may be so buried in him that the new man may be raised up in him, that all carnal affections may die in him and all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him, that he may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. This high position claimed equally for all baptized, rich or poor, is being shown to be practically tenable in all classes in the land. The realisation of the relation to Christ as the new man, the realisation of the relation to Him as the new head of humanity, the realisation of our humanity exalted into heaven, is bringing to the separate souls of the faithful this simple practical truth—that if the Rock of Ages is now so high, if there He has been cleft for us, and the water has flowed from His precious side, and if that, through the channel of His appointed sacraments, reaches us, then, as it were, as water finds its own level, we too may hope to rise and be with Him, and sit with Him on His throne as He is set down on His Father's throne. The distinct realisation of our membership and mystical incorporation in Christ, that our life is now hid with Him and He in God; that, as it were, the whole power of the fountain of Deity is flowing through that ascended humanity to us, is giving new energy, new hope, to the several members of Christ's Church on earth. And so again the prayer that carnal affections may die is being realised, not only in abstaining from deeds of sin but from thoughts, and crushing out all tendencies of evil. Men not only set themselves now to seek for things which are above, but they set their affections on things above. They love the things of heaven; they are ready to give their lives for the world to come; their tastes are not of earth; they savour of things that are above; and this among the poor as well as among the rich, and among the rich as well as among the poor. The prayer for strength to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh is practically becoming day by day more visibly proved in the triumph of the Spirit in the individual lives of the redeemed. All this seems to me, speaking as a priest of the Church of England, to be practically true, practically valuable, as showing that the position of the Prayer Book is a practically working truth.

II. And yet again, if it is valuable, as it seems to me, to look around and watch the triumph of the man of war in the individual heart as setting our seal to the truth of Holy Writ, and as proving the words of our Church tenably true, there is a third thought, a third way in which this advance in spiritual things seems to me to offer a profitable and a comforting thought. I would desire to speak upon it not only with charity but with gratitude. I mean this, that the triumphs of the Lord in the individual hearts among us now give to us, I believe, an increasing hope for unity throughout Christendom. We cannot deny the debt we owe to the spiritual labours of those

Nonconformist brethren around the Church of England during the days of the Church's lethargy and neglect. We cannot deny that from the fire of the surrounding altars of Western Christendom we have of late years rekindled our own. We owe them a debt of gratitude though we cannot join them in their present error; but while we cannot join them now, we are, I believe, preparing for a more close and lasting union, in God's own time, by the individual progress in spiritual things, and we are preparing for a union by training individuals to follow the pathway of the saints with contentment and confidence in our own communion and in being in the mystical body of Christ.

The thought which I would just leave with you is this. God is one and the same: the Lord is a man of war now as of old · He is working amongst us: He is still supreme: He is still supreme over the power of the enemy. This world—He could turn it back. All the power of the enemy is under His hand. He can do what He will. Now the thought that I want you to carry away to-night is this. Will you join in singing a song of victory? Is there any one here to-night who is conscious that at this Eastertide he has by God's grace been winning victories in his own heart and life? Does he feel that he is alone? I would desire as a simple stranger to say, there are more for us than you may think. You may suppose you are alone, but as of old there are yet the seven thousand who have not bowed their knee to Baal. It is not numbers that we want: what we want is individuals in clear union with Christ—themselves given up to do the divine will in His own way and in His own time. There were but one hundred and twenty left to carry on the war when the Captain of our salvation ascended from this earth, and we yet may, nay I believe shall, win spiritual victories against the enemy in our separate souls such as would astonish many who carelessly deal with these things. I would earnestly then desire you to reflect and see what responsibilities are with you. If I may speak freely, I believe there is no danger of want of those who will minister to you. There is no difficulty, I believe, if only that which I have said may be fulfilled. It is Christ—it is Christ's truth—which we love: it is this which we want. It is this for which by God's help we are determined to die. There need be no failing here. But will you do your part, to set your seal to the still-continuing triumphant power of divine grace?

Let me mention two ways shortly in which I think you may. You do not begin early enough. The sins of children and the sins of the young are more and deeper than many people imagine. O Christian parents, take care of the souls committed to you. We do not begin early enough.

And next, you do not go thoroughly enough. It is the half-lives of Christians which are such a poor proof of the truth of our Lord's works. If you would but smite several times and not stay, then would the victory be complete. If you would but believe the simple testimony which I desire to give you to-night, gathered from simple people but true, if you would but believe it, and try to live by the Sermon on the Mount, aiming according as the Saviour directs you to aim, not according to what a miserable expediency of the present day would tell you is sufficient, you would find that the Saviour's words are true and that there is power to triumph on the side of the Lord now as of old. You do not work thoroughly enough.

Let me ask you before this Easter season closes to think again of this song of the Lamb, to think whether you can sing it honestly, heartily, that the Lord is a man of war, and that He has triumphed in your own heart. Think of it not selfishly but think of furthering this great unity for which the Saviour prayed. Think of it as setting your seal upon the truth of the Saviour's words. And then we have further, as it were, the promise that this song shall be on the lips of all those who at last prevail, for S. John tells us in the Revelation, that he saw those who had overcome standing not on the waters of a troubled sea but standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb. There shall be for us a triumphant singing of this song when this conflict is over, and we too may join, with the great saints of old having the harps of God, proclaiming His glory, and say, 'Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints!' Kings, priests, and saints, that is what you are. That is what you are, and your lives require that you should express the triumph of God's grace over evil in your several hearts: and for the love of our common Master, for the truth of His Word, do not spare yourselves.

BISHOP KING.

Spring.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle (dove) is heard in our land. SOLOMON'S SONG ii. 11, 12.

LET us have fellowship with nature this month of April, as her works come forth into vernal freshness and beauty; let us welcome the spring-time to our souls; may we pass 'from death unto life'! God is saying to us now, 'Behold, I make all things new.'

Let us reply, 'Let us be included; make us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.'

Let us learn the divine lessons which this season is adapted to teach.

I. The spectacle of earth and trees and blossoms suggests to us the certain conclusion that the Almighty Creator delights in the material world which He has made. 'And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed . . . and the tree yielding fruit . . . and God saw that it was good.' 'He hath made everything beautiful in his time.' The method of divine government not only removes from our minds the notion of an arbitrary Ruler, but also of one who is but little interested in all the work of His hands. 'And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.'

Not only are material wants provided for, but the forms of beauty which the objects take—the shape, the colours, the gracefulness, the scent—indicate to us that some higher purpose than our animal wants was in the mind of the Supreme Maker. By giving us a capacity for enjoyment, and by surprises of beauty and sweetness at every turn, He clearly meant us to gather the truth that all harmony, and grace and life are dear to Him.

II. Communion with nature awakens the mind to a conviction of the order and harmony which pervade the whole universe. We draw conclusions from the narrow limits of our own observation on the earth to the fields of infinity; finding that in every region of the globe the same sources of enjoyment are opened to man, we are warranted to conclude that, with ever recurring changes of form, there is invariableness of benevolent law throughout the boundless realms of the Almighty Ruler. We judge of the whole from a part, and every spring is a secret assurance to our minds that we witness but the result, in a little garden, of a law of life which binds in one sole and indissoluble bond of living order the immeasurable universe of God. The life which underlies our little plots, and attracts by its springing our vividest emotions of gladness and admiration, is one with the great creative and renewing life which praises God in all parts of His dominions.

III. God has seen fit to instruct His inspired servants to lead us to recognise His personal will and presence in the changes of the seasons, and to blend with acknowledgments of sin and with worship the recognition of His immediate influence on hill and valley, on corn and cattle. 'Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparedst them with corn when Thou hast so provided for it.' This is the Bible teaching concerning Nature. We are awakened by its spring to the truth that God walks with us in the garden. Thus He calls forth His children to commune with Him in the fields. See if He is an austere Master. See if His handywork is not beautiful and attractive. And this is He for whom 'praise waits in Sion, who purges away our iniquities.' We well may say, 'Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee!'

IV. This spring of life is that 'passing from death unto life,' that new birth, as from winter to spring, of which the Bible speaks. Love is the spring of life; 'because we love we live.' Love is the old perfect tense of life; our moral life is dead when we hate and are loveless. 'He abideth in death.' This is the frost-bound winter of the soul. We receive the seed of the word, the message of eternal life, the word of reconciliation; the breath of the Almighty breathes into us, and 'we love Him because He first loved us.' 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' No 'field which the Lord has blessed,' no trees and flowers in spring are so beautiful as a family, as a church, 'dwelling together in unity.' Where brotherly love continues, 'there everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers.'

Conscious, willing co-operation and communion with the Spirit of life is the condition of this fresh and new life. We must be 'workers together with God, who worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.' 'He meets him who rejoices, those who remember Him in His ways.' We are treated as friends, not as slaves or inanimate objects. Let us have harmony with Him in His grand purpose. He would restore the living order to His rebellious children. He would bring us, in His Son, to the regaining of His image. He designs to make His love the law of our lives; and when we receive His love in Christ Jesus into our hearts, and produce it in our tempers and lives, we concur with His wisdom, and are 'renewed in knowledge,' and all things are new.

B. KENT.

The New Song.

And they sing a new song. REVELATION v. 9.

A NEW song—how can anything be new in Heaven? There is no change there; God Himself is always the same, and they who are in His presence desire nothing better than that everything should be the same as it is. Yet here, and again and again throughout this book, S. John tells us how he heard the redeemed, the blessed in heaven, singing a new song before the Throne of God. How can this be? was there ever a time when God's praise was *not* sung in heaven? or was there ever a time when He became more glorious than He has been from all eternity, so that there was some thing new to sing in His praise?

No, certainly there never was a time, since God first made any creature, that His creatures did not bless the Lord, praise and magnify Him. And God always, for all eternity, was as glorious as He is now, as worthy to be blessed and praised and magnified. But there was a time when God's glory and holiness were not so fully revealed as now; so that every fresh work of His, every fresh action that comes from His eternal purpose, manifests His eternal nature, has given, not a new glory to Him, but a new knowledge of His glory to His creatures, and a new subject of songs of praise to them. Thus God says, 'When I laid the foundations of the earth,' that then 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' When there were no creatures of God but the holy angels who saw His face, they learned more of Him than ever they had known before, when the Word of the Lord, by whom the heavens were of old, went forth again to create the earth under the heavens.

And again, when the same Eternal Word went forth again from the Father, not now to make the world, but to save the world, then the angels learned a new song of praise; they not only sang as of old, 'Glory to God in the highest,' but joined with it a new strain, 'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.' The angels sang the new song then, though there were now others who had more concern than they in the new revelation of God's glory, and ought to have raised their voices louder than theirs in the new song of praise which it called forth. The Word of God 'took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham'; so the whole seed of Abraham, yea, the whole seed of Adam, ought to have been ready to praise the Incarnate Word; but they were not. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' The angels sang their new song, their Christmas carol; but no men had voices trained to join in it; all but a very few had ears too dull even to hear the angels singing.

I. But now S. John tells us of a new song, which is sung by men as well as by angels. Those holy and mighty beings who are more than angels, the Cherubim and Seraphim nearest the Throne of God, these, who it seems are represented in S. John's vision by the four Living Creatures, are first able to join in the song; but it is quite plain that they have but one part at most in seven, with the company of the Church of God, the glorious company of the Apostles, and the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel. Cherubim and Seraphim, patriarchs and apostles, all together join in this song, which may well be called a new song; for till the first Easter Day there never was such a thing done or thought of as that which to-day they sing of.

'Thou wast slain,' they sing to the Lamb of God, 'and didst redeem to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and didst make them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign upon the earth.'

And yet, though this was a new song on the first Easter Day, how was it new when S. John heard it? It was some forty years since the Lamb was slain and death was overcome; and nothing new had happened in that time—nothing new, I mean, in the life or works of the Lamb Himself. For all these forty years the story of redemption had been no new story, either to Cherubim and Seraphim, or to Patriarchs and Apostles; it was not new to S. John himself, who on the first Easter morning had seen and believed. Still less is it new to us; it is near two thousand years since it happened, and we have known it all our lives; to us the story is 'the old, old story,' at best a dear and familiar friend, at worst a thing so familiar that it seems commonplace, or so old that it seems doubtful if it could be true.

Yes, it was an old story to S. John now, it is an old story to us, how the Lamb of God hath taken away the sins of the world; it was doubtless an old song to him, as it is to us, to sing His praise for His redemption. Yet S. John tells us elsewhere that what the Saviour called a new commandment, that we love one another, though it is an old commandment, is yet even now a new commandment in Him and in us; and even so the old story becomes a new song, when His glory as set forth in the old story is more fully comprehended, and when we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, and changed into His image as we comprehend more fully what He has done. The revelation of God's love in Christ, like the commandment to copy it in our own love, is the word which we heard from the beginning; but we see it with new eyes, and sing His praise to a new tune, when we are brought nearer to Him. S. John had sung the praise of his Redeemer as well as a man on earth could sing; but it was new to him to hear it sung by seraphim or by saints made perfect. To us it might be new to hear it sung even as he sang it on earth—faith and love like his would so shine forth as to make the old story touch our hearts with a new fire; but the difference between a saint in this world and a saint before God's Throne is greater, surely, than the difference between the greatest and the least of all God's people on earth.

II. This then is why the song of God's glorified creation is ever new, even to those who by faith have known His glory long before, and by His grace have responded to it with songs that seemed, for the time, not unworthy of it. Thus not S. John only and the other Apostles, but prophets and psalmists long before, had sung the Redeemer's praise: as one of them says, 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.' Even in this very word he tells us what is the difference between the old song and the new; he knew enough of God's righteousness to sing His praise, but still he could only sing it in the house of his pilgrimage. Much more did S. John know of God's lovingkindness, who had beheld the glory of the Only-begotten, which he received from the Father; but he also could only sing of that glory as in a house of pilgrimage. He might not yet lean, as of old, on Jesus' bosom; he knew now, better than of old, what Jesus' glory was, and loved Him better than in those days, when he was outwardly so much nearer to him; but, just in proportion as he owed Him more, so he felt all the more how far off he was from Him. Even in this revelation of Jesus' glory, which was granted to the Apostle to comfort him in his sufferings, it was shown how the world that persecuted him was a Babylon—not only an oppressor to God's people, but a land where they themselves are forced to dwell in exile from their true home, Jerusalem which is above; and, like another Psalmist, they are forced to say, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' Yet they do sing; that Psalmist sang, and few have ever sung more sweetly; but he could not sing as they sing in heaven. There they have seraphim to show them how to sing, and the harps of God to accompany their singing; here we are too far off to hear the angels' voices, and as for our harps, we hanged them up upon the trees in the land of our captivity. We can only sing in a low, mournful voice, like those who croon over doubtfully a sweet tune which they have once heard and cannot quite recall. We come nearer and nearer to it by practice, but we never can feel we are quite right: it is indeed certain that we never shall sing quite aright till we hear it sung as it is in heaven. Then it will be a new song—to sing perfectly this song which we sing so imperfectly now.

III. Yet, imperfect as it is, our practising is not wasted; it is in this that our only hope lies of ever being found fit to join in the chorus 'with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven.' Here on earth we sing God's praises, not as He deserves, but as we can; there, He will teach those who sung the old song well to join in the new song so as to make no discord with those who even now sing it so perfectly. I say they sing it perfectly now, and yet the song of the great choir is not perfect till all our voices also join in it; Cherubim and Seraphim sing their parts perfectly, but the harmony will be richer when our feebler voices and our simpler strains come in to blend with theirs; our part may be very subordinate, but without it the concert is not complete, nor the great Master's conception fully carried out. Therefore our pains are not wasted, nor are they hopeless, when we try to discipline our dull ears and modulate our harsh voices: poor as the result is now, while each one of us, or each isolated band of us, is singing alone, it will be otherwise when the great Master of the Choir puts us in our proper station, and when our voices fall in, in their due harmony, with those seraphic ones.

And so let us do our best now to sing the praises of our Maker and Redeemer, if not yet worthily, yet a little better than we have hitherto done. And if you ask how our singing is to be improved, there are many ways in which we all may learn it. For you to whom God has given the power literally to sing to His praise and glory, the faithful use of that power—the industrious culture of it—is undoubtedly no unworthy or unimportant part of your preparation to join in the new song that is sung before the Throne of God. Your voices will help to lift up your hearts, and the hearts of your brethren too, to the Lord: you will show them how to join with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, in their unceasing song to the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts. Do you so lift up your hearts to the Lord? are you, you men, whom God has called to sing His praises in the Church, always to be found at that service where the Church on earth comes nearest to heaven, because He who is in heaven comes nearer to His Church than He ever did when He was on earth? If not, be sure that men who keep away from God's altar on earth, whether it be by reason of known and unrepented sin, or from mere coldness of heart and want of devotion, or (what is perhaps the least bad motive) from want of trust in His forgiving love, that is able to cover even such unworthiness as ours—whatever, I say, be the reason that keeps men from God's altar, that same reason makes them unworthy to do angels' work by singing God's praises in the Church, and makes them unfit to sing with Cherubim and Seraphim before the Throne of God. Give your whole heart to God; draw nigh to Him with full confession of your sins, and with as full trust in His mercy, and then you will be able to praise Him indeed. But if not, though your voice may sound sweet to human ears, though it may even touch human hearts, and suggest holy thoughts to them, yet it will be a discord in the ears of God and of His saints and angels; you will never be admitted to sing in the heavenly choir.

W. H. SIMCOX.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Power of the Resurrection.

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away. S. Mark xvi. 3, 4.

THERE had been a public execution in the capital of Judea. Three men had suffered. Of two of them, their own account was that they had 'received the due reward of their deeds.' The third, exposed with an exquisite cruelty between companions in agony, though not in crime, was at once the victim of His own goodness, and of the malignity of an ossified faith. He died, but before He could be left quiet in His grave, one more insult was done. The religious leaders who had glutted their animosity on one whom they could neither corrupt nor silence, were by no means easy in their minds as to His Person and claims, and on the Roman governor's scornful permission to make this dead 'deceiver' as safe in His grave as soldiers and seals could make Him, they 'sealed the stone and set a watch.' What happened on the third day this Gospel tells us in language as unaffected as it is strange. With no thought of finding the tomb empty, and their only sorrow that there was so little left to do for one they loved so well, some women came early to the tomb with spices and ointments, to hear from an angel's voice, 'He is risen, He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him.' What next happened is exactly what we should have expected. Fear swallowed up joy; surprise altogether took away the power of reflection. 'They went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre, for they trembled and were amazed.'

Now, on this account of the most stupendous event in history I wish to speak to-day, and from one aspect of it. It is, of course, quite needless to argue that the Resurrection of Christ, if sufficiently substantiated, is the formal verification of His religion. If Christ is raised, then all the other supernatural elements in our faith are covered and crowned by this one; for it is a foolish pedantry to accept the greater, and to deny the less. If Christ be not raised, then the noblest ideal we have ever known, or can know, melts into a gloomy mirage; and though for reason the difficulties that surround the hypothesis of Jesus mouldering in His tomb are perhaps even more serious than those which declare Him to be risen, a still dead Jesus means that our nature is a riddle, our hope a despair, and our future an abyss.

My point now is that the facts of our religion—which if supernatural is historical—are, when rightly appreciated, so many moral forces for the soul, incorporating ideas which give courage and gladness, and containing principles which are at the root of conduct and life. Pre-eminent among them all is the event of the Resurrection, and I say faith in this event is the one and only force that adequately enables us to roll away the stones that encounter us in the struggles of life; and that what S. Paul calls the 'power' of the Resurrection, is for all of us, not least for the young—who have their great opportunities, and untold possibilities in front and unexhausted—the mighty secret of a steady triumph over temptation, difficulty, and sorrow.

I. And, first, the Resurrection is a power to heal conscience.

No system of thought that does not admit the fact of sin, or attempt to explain its meaning, or assist us in becoming delivered from its dominion can hope to satisfy the needs of mankind. It is a very shallow philosophy that either blinks the fact of conscience, or flippantly denies its immense influence on life. Conscience has been not inaptly described as the meeting-place between God and the soul; and in whatever language we define sin, it is the same in its essence and in its results—man's missing his right aim in life, wandering from the direct path of goodness, a defiance to His Maker, a suicide to himself.

Well, in all ages and countries the human heart has had two questions to ask about it, which we Christians are bold to say nothing but the Resurrection can completely answer. One is about pardon, and the other about righteousness. The one seeks peace with God, the other His image. And the Resurrection is the power for both. For it is a fact which does not stand alone. It looks back and it points forward. It implies the Cross, and it presumes the Ascension. He who rose from the grave, must first have died, to have been found there. Why did He die? How did He die? He died, as this same Gospel tells us, or as the Scriptures of those very priests who condemned him affirm, on the Cross, 'bearing our sins in His own Body on the tree.' 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.' For He who died between the two thieves was not only a Martyr, but a Sin-Bearer. So fully and awfully did He, our Head and Representative, feel the weight of the guilt of the race of which He was the Head; in such profound and holy sympathy was His sinless spirit with the woe of His guilty fellows, and that holiness of His Father which demanded expiation of it all, that in a spasm of ineffable sorrow, His heart all but broke under the tremendous burden, and He felt Himself forsaken by Him, whom in thus suffering there, He supremely manifested before the world.

He died, and if He had only died, while we should have been grateful for an unparalleled sacrifice, we should have mourned over its uselessness. But now is Christ risen from the dead; and in that Resurrection by the mighty hand of God we see His sacrifice accepted, and death tasted for every man, and peace ensured, and life eternal given. God is revealed in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. For He who rose also went away. 'It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you.' After the Resurrection came the Ascension, after the Ascension Pentecost. 'Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' Sin on the conscience is one great stone which the Resurrection rolls away. Sin in the will is another. His grace helps us to hate that which is evil, and to resist coarse and degrading instincts, and to practise self-control, and to carry the burdens of the weak, and to regard gifts and faculties as opportunities both of kindness and virtue. 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.' To be forgiven, because in our sincere repentance we have treated and trusted God as a Father, and believed His love to us in Christ, is great freedom. So is it also to be 'dead unto sin, and alive unto God' through union with that incarnate Lord, who, as He bore our sins and identified Himself with our misery, is also made righteousness to us, whereby we through our regeneration, grafted into Him, are before God righteous in His righteousness; nay, are even made partakers of His divine nature, 'having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust.'

II. The Resurrection is also a power to ennoble duty This thing that we call life—what is it? Is it (in the figure of an American preacher) but as the dipping of an insect's wing into the brimming flood of some tropical river—the quick submerging into a devouring sea of one after another of the myriad barques that are ever being launched on it, each with its solitary voyager, full of hope and gladness; or, in the expression of one who seems unable either to believe or deny, 'a journey between two long nights'? Then assuredly the saddest mystery about it is that it should ever have been given us at all. For the history of the world becomes but the epitaph of an unintelligible and gratuitous disaster, and it is a just, if a sombre complaint that goes up to the Author of our being (if there is an author of it), 'Why hast Thou made all men for nought?' It has been repeatedly observed that the purest and loftiest of pagan writers are almost bitter in their denunciation of the vanity of life, and those who are at the pains to study the philosophies of modern atheists observe that they are always characterised by a gloomy joylessness.

But in the light of the Resurrection, life is seen to be worth living, for the stone of a purposeless and brief existence is rolled away, and with its new aims and responsibilities and functions and motives this life on earth has a new meaning and force. There is its stupendous responsibility, for some day we shall rise to receive the things done in our body—that is, their results, whether they be good or bad. There is its universal jurisdiction. For the Resurrection of the race, like its inevitable mortality, is generically bound up with the Resurrection of its Head: 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' There is its potential grace: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' There is its majestic consecration: 'Render your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service.'

Now we make ties, for death cannot dissolve them; now we may scatter the seeds of goodness since we shall not be sowing them on the waves of a remorseless sea; now, as we rear our children, and win our friends, and grasp our duties, and pursue our studies, the chilling taunt does not come to mock us: 'You are all of you but as the shadows of the clouds on the mountain side.' Now we feel it worth while to try for humbleness and purity, for great tasks and meek virtues; for steady effort, and patient love. All shall not be in vain, all shall have its sure and happy recompense if Jesus is Lord and Christ.

III. Again, the Resurrection is a power to explain death. Death is the one great fact that casts its ghastly shadow over the world, chilling youth, saddening age, and like a black wall on the horizon overshadowing for manhood the grand activities in front. But is it the end of our journey, or only a stage in it? Is it the final parting of hearts? for if it be, then it will be our wisdom never to love, and so never to lose. If there is no other stage of being, what a thin, poor, meagre thing it all becomes; what contradictions perplex us in aspirations that are doomed to be disappointed; in efforts which we feel compelled to make, and yet are forced to throw away. But the Resurrection shows us that death is only an event in life, not the abrupt closing of it. Christ comes and says, 'I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death.' As if to say, 'I have learnt all about it, and have tasted it for each of you, and I will help you to bear it, when your turn comes, and the bondage of its fear I will take away from you, and change it into the caress of a Brother's arm encircling you, if only you will trust in Me.' This, I say to one who ponders his mysterious being, and recognises within him the moving springs of useful action, and strives, though timidly and sorrowfully, after wisdom and goodness, is a help of a vital and noble kind. 'Because

I live, ye shall live also.' His death was our death, and His Resurrection our resurrection. We have each of us to go down alone to the brink of the river, and to leave behind us all we have ever known and possessed and loved, and to pass into another condition of which we have no kind of experience, and most probably to abandon schemes but half completed, and lessons but scantily learned. Yet in the world to which we go, there will be leisure enough in the great spaces of eternity to mellow and develop in that light which needeth not the sun or moon to lighten it, the germs of thought and action which we sowed here; if there is no waste in the domain of nature, there is none in the sphere of spirit, and the continuity of eternal life apparently interrupted by our physical dissolution shall be reunited, and carried on under new conditions of perfection in the glory of the world to come.

IV. Once more, the Resurrection is a power to console sorrow. Some here to-day may possibly feel that this does not much concern them. Like soldiers going into battle, they need stimulating rather than comforting; like travellers starting on a long journey, they want not medicine, but cordial. Well, you have only to wait a little, and then, like all the rest of us, your tired hearts will thankfully fall back on the consolations of God. As a matter of fact, however, youth when fresh and sensitive, is far more liable to moods of depression than middle life, just because its vast inexperience compels disappointment for it. It may, however, be true that the purest souls are the saddest, because they are so disturbed by the corruption which they find themselves unable to remedy; certainly, it is the blessed Nemesis of sympathy that it gives the widest margin for sorrow.

To all of us in turn, when we need Him, and waiting till we do, the risen Jesus says, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee? Come to Me, and stand by My open tomb, and I will Myself comfort thee.' Have you observed that it was a 'young man' whom the women beheld, 'sitting at the right hand in the tomb, and clothed in a white garment'? Surely that gives the attractive and invigorating suggestion that the life to come will be a period of perpetual youth, with physical vigour which sickness shall neither enfeeble nor interrupt, youth with a grand enthusiasm, which shall neither be chilled by irony, nor wasted by disappointment; youth, with time enough in front for perfecting its plans, and reaching its ideals, and enjoying its friendships, and widening its knowledge; youth, which no taint of corruption shall soil with the least stain of imperfection, and which in an ever-growing goodness shall have the image and fruition of God.

There are many ways, but I shall indicate only one.

Reverently observe those devout and sorrowful women who, blinded by their beautiful anguish, and expecting nothing so little as to miss Jesus and to find an angel, stumbled into the light, because it was in their hearts already, and soon discovered what at first was too good to be true. They loved, they waited, they obeyed, and in the end Jesus came to them, and they saw and believed.

Let us, too, love and wait and obey, and sooner or later He will come to us.

BISHOP THOROLD.

Christian Service.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.' S. LUKE xxii. 27.

ONE of the signs of the time is a new consciousness of others' needs. All parties assume that there are rights which have not been recognised, and duties which have not been done. The poor and weak are in need, and Christ's followers are among them as those who would serve. The desire to serve is forcing men to new, and sometimes to strange, activities; it exists in all and waits for expression. As I look at you I feel, as it were, breaking against my mind thoughts you have never uttered, longings you have hidden, 'the beatings of that passionate humanity' which underlies the calm surface of outward manners. The various hopes, the indistinct ideals, which lead you to care for others' needs wait for some voice to give them expression. I can imagine how, as you ask of the Force which holds you, 'What is thy name?' some voice might put into clear language the method and the end of the nineteenth century revolution. Busy with our trade and surrounded with the signs of wealth, we, like Jacob, have been met by the angel of our forgotten brother. It is in the struggle with this angel, in the effort to find what we must do for others' needs, that we shall get the knowledge which will change our characters and make us princes with God.

Where two or three are gathered, there Christ is. Where two talk earnestly, as did they who walked to Emmaus, of the 'things which have happened,' to commune together of all their meaning, a third is always present, though their eyes be holden. The third is the Ideal of the age, the Christ that is to be. I can imagine how the Ideal of this age might be declared, how the one purpose to which all things move might be shown, how human life might be transfigured, and the future made manifest as the image of Christ, full of knowledge and of love. Among us as we sit at ease and count them great who are served, is, once more, the figure of One that serveth. When we acknowledge Him to be our Master, and follow Him, then we shall eat and drink at the table of peace and sit on thrones of knowledge.

Love is not dead, even in breasts hardened by success and fashion—every one that loveth has the means of knowing God. As the highest end of life is to know God and enjoy Him for ever, I am glad of the interest which proves the existence of human love, which is men's guide to God. I am nevertheless anxious. There is such a thing as taking the Sacrament unworthily; the Body and Blood of Christ, which feeds the life of the true man, hardens the heart of the hypocrite. They who enter the service of the people take a solemn Sacrament, they handle the most sacred things of life, their brothers' souls. Such a Sacrament may be taken unworthily. Society enters the service, and as it talks of its care for the poor, over its wasteful dinner tables, it eats and drinks its own damnation. The many who listen eagerly to tales of suffering take the Sacrament, but instead of finding life by giving themselves as comforters, they find death by wearing out their best emotions. I fear lest this new interest end in apathy; lest they who began by caring end in callousness; or lest by some hurried action men satisfy their conscience or their pride.

To-day, then, while I pray that the Spirit of God may give to all service that spark from heaven for which we wait, I will try to be practical as I speak of that kind of service with which I have come in contact. Three methods of meeting the needs of the poor may be said to be service by giving, by doing, and by being.

I. As to service by giving. A few years ago educated public opinion condemned giving. Misery and poverty were shown to be largely due to the gifts of the rich. 'The next most pernicious thing to vice,' said an able American writer on social duties, 'is charity in its broad and popular sense.' Against this teaching there is now a kind of reaction. Gifts of food and clothing have, we are told, their use. From some high in authority the suggestion has come that dinners should be provided for school children, and from others (who speak not with authority), the demand comes that all wants should be supplied by gifts.

Evil must, it seems to me, result from such a course. Relief, if it is to be helpful, must follow and not prevent friendship, it must strengthen and not weaken character, it must have for its object the good and not the comfort of individuals. Dinners to children would be destructive to home life, and gifts from strangers would defraud a man of the power to do his duty. Dives has his good things, but Lazarus has his good things also. It is easier to take from the poor man his energy of character and the simplicity of love, than it is to give him the width of view and the pleasure of living which belong to wealth. That evils exist is not to be denied, and no sensational account quite reveals the condition in which the poor live. Dock labourers who are happy if they get twelve shillings a week all the year round, tailoresses who are paid threepence for making complete a boy's suit, these and many like them endure evils not to be described in words. Money could certainly remedy some of these evils, and yet gifts of money have ever proved harmful to the recipients. They speak truth who loudly proclaim the suffering of poverty, the sorrow of mothers weeping for children killed by bad air or overwork, the joylessness of life without knowledge or pleasure. They speak truth who tell the power of gifts, but they also speak truth who say that giving is cruel kindness, more likely to break up than to establish homes. What then is to be done? To this I answer that gifts must continue, but their aim must be to develop character. The lowest man is brother to the highest. Gifts must aim at developing the high in the low, at bringing out the manlike qualities in those who live as animals. It is not by treating a man as well as a pet dog that he will become manlike, it is by recognising his brotherhood with the best.

There is still a place for gifts, but they who give must have patience about the results; they must aim at the best good, the creation of character, at the development of powers of thought and feeling, at uniting man's life with God's life. They must do good by gifts of luxuries, of books, of the best, but they must be content not to see the good. In giving it is 'the passionate patience of genius' which will achieve its end. The law of giving will always seem a hard saying, and many who can say, 'I have built churches, founded hospitals, and fed the hungry,' will go away sorrowful when they hear what sort of giving the Master and Brother of men requires. To give is not hard, but to share is hard, as Lowell said

'The holy supper is kept indeed—
In what so we share with another's need,
Not what we give, but what we share.'

II. As to service by doing. There is a hymn which says, 'Doing is a deadly thing.' The saying is foolish, but it has its truth. Work with machinery wearies, we are told, the workman by its absence of variety, by the small call it makes on his hope or fear. The man who might have found work to be rest, and following his calling to be life, finds work with a machine to be deadly. The doing which fills many lives is in the same way deadly. It follows a regular system, it has to do with a part, and not the whole, and it makes little call upon the doer's power of originating. Modern doing, with its division of labour, and its impulse of competition, accomplishes great things, but none can say that modern doers are full of joy or life. By doing many have got the habits and the sorrows of slaves, and they look to retire as slaves look to be free. Doing accomplishes much, but doing is often deadly, killing in men the powers by which they could enjoy life and God. How then will doing cease to be deadly? Simply when things are done with rather than for people. Governing though it be of a kingdom does not satisfy a man, but guiding though it be of a child satisfies a god. Governing is doing for others, guiding is doing with others. The Established Church is now wanting in life, and fails in its national mission, because it aims at doing good for the people and not with or by the people. Doing cannot be deadly when it is bound up with life, when human perversity rouses human ingenuity, when human needs rouse human hopes and fears. This, I think, is true of all doing. Bodily exercise, intellectual work, trade, are deadly doing till all are done with others, in sympathy with the many who are poor in pleasure, knowledge, or money. It is true (I speak from experience) of that doing which is called philanthropy. The doing for the poor which ends in a law or institution, the doing which ends in a committee and a secretary, the doing which is done through agents, and at a distance from the poor, is deadly. All help must be co-operation, the helper and the helped must be partners; over the thing done must be the grasped hand. Doing which helps must be with the people, among friends; not for the people, to strangers.

There is sadness unutterable which such doing could remove. Because so little has been done with the people to carry out the laws in poor neighbourhoods, therefore it is they die of disease, bred of dirt and crowds. Because so little has been done to amuse people with people, therefore it is the lives of the majority are joyless. Because so little has been done to share the knowledge—the good and perfect gift which God has given to this age—it is that in this Christian land God is unknown as the Source of life. In our service of doing let the rule be to serve by doing with the people. Of such doing there may be no end, and of time to do it there is no lack. When so many have time to go round in an eddy of purposeless visits, time to labour at what profits no one, time to organise parties for those who invite again, time to make friends among the rich, there is time to do more with those whose needs call loudest. The field of the world is ripe, white to the harvest; there is a strange drawing together of nations and classes. To do the will of God is the meat which nourishes men.

III. As to service by being. All cannot give, all cannot do, but all can be. He who serves by being, gives the best service. It was Erskine's life which made his chance greeting sink into the Scotch shepherd's heart. It is the difference in what we are which makes a difference in our work. 'If a man be immoral,' the other day wrote a well-known tutor, 'its sign is on every paper he does, it destroys his work.' Being is the measure of doing. It is they who are best who do best. The saviours of mankind have been the meek and lowly in heart, and the highest name found for God is 'I Am.' God is not God, because He gives or because He does, but because His name, His character, His Being is love. He serves best who is most.

We must be more, and to be more we must more often think of our ideal. Man is man because 'he can mind.' We must mind our ideal. The common standard of righteousness is not high enough. A truly honest man aspires to do more than satisfy the requirements of the Bankruptcy Court; we must do more than satisfy the requirements of convention and respectability. Except our righteousness exceed that of the religionists and philanthropists, we cannot be as those who serve. It is not enough that we are approved of men, that our conduct is held to be irreproachable, our lives said to be devoted, or even our opinions unorthodox. We must be more, and for this we must be intent on, must 'mind' the highest which we know or can conceive. As it is 'each half lives a hundred different lives.' One thing only is needful, and that is to sit at the feet of—be intent, as Mary was, on—'the Highest and Best.'

CANON BARNETT.

St. Paul's Preaching.

Because he preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection. Acts xvii. 18.

THERE are times in the life of every thoughtful man when he is thrown back suddenly, as it were, upon the foundations of his faith. Nowhere else can he find the strength to support him, or the light to make his way plain. It may be that he has been startled and discouraged by some religious doubt which has been presented to him, perhaps an old foe with a new face. Or, his mind has been exercised by some of the many social questions which seem to seek in vain for an answer in our own day. Or, he has been perplexed by the mystery which enshrouds some of God's dealings with the world. It may be that some personal misfortune has burst upon him, and found him unprepared; or, that the death angel has swept down, and the shadow of those dark wings has been cast upon the brightness of his home. In any case, as a Christian, he believes that a revelation was made which was to be sufficient for his spiritual wants; a gospel preached which was to give rest to the weary and light to all who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. Not improbably, he discovers that his mind has been dwelling far too much on some particular article of his belief, or on some special form of worship. These do not suffice. He wants something wider and deeper by far. He must 'search the Scriptures.' That which he requires may be found in the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ.

I. Many strange and disquieting thoughts must have occupied the minds of the Apostles when the divine Master was risen from the dead. Most anxious, perhaps, they would be about that sacred office which He called upon them to fill, that teaching which He sent them forth to bear to all the nations of the world. But when He had passed from their sight up into the heavens, and when the Holy Spirit had come down, this point, at all events, seemed clear. The Spirit did guide them into all the truth. They 'preached Jesus and the Resurrection.' This was the foundation of the faith. This was the basis of Christianity. They had been intrusted with no code of laws. They had received no special ritual, no elaborated forms of worship. On a few points, indeed, the words of the Master had been precise and clear; and two outward signs of inward grace had been ordained by Christ Himself. But this was almost all. As social or ecclesiastical questions arose one after another, we see how carefully the Apostles had to feel their way. That doctrine of the Resurrection it was which was to do the mighty work of regenerating the world. Hence, it was preached everywhere. The seed was sown even where the soil seemed unsuitable, and the climate hopeless. To the bigoted dwellers at Jerusalem and to the more liberal Jews of the dispersion; to the rough peoples among the highlands of Asia Minor and to the polished inhabitants of the most learned of ancient cities, the message was the same. By many, as might have been expected, it was received with mocking incredulity or grave suspicion. Some, when they heard it, seemed driven almost to frenzy; others, as here at Athens, took the preacher for a mere babbler, a picker up of trifles, or a setter forth of strange gods. And yet, in spite of all, this teaching overthrew the citadels of heathenism, and made its way into the very heart of the world.

II. S. Paul 'preached Jesus and the Resurrection.' The Saviour not only died but rose again. To the Apostles this meant a new birth of their hopes and their faith. This very nature seemed transformed. When the cloud hid their Lord from their sight, and the sun of His presence was withdrawn, it was only that the light might be more diffused, that it might be visible for ever, and everywhere. It was a change from the seen to the unseen, from the personal presence to the presence through His indwelling Spirit. Thus, how immeasurably Christian faith gains by this revelation of the Resurrection of Jesus. It declared a new life, a life in Christ, and through

Christ a personal union with the Father of all. It declared the continuity of that life. 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' More, far more, than a personal Saviour to follow, and to love, and to obey; a living power which makes that following, that love, that obedience to be possible. It is the crown of the Christian's faith that life flows into him from his Risen Lord, because he is 'in Christ.' This union is the means whereby true lasting life is brought to body and to soul. Imagination loves to dwell on some hero of past days; or some saint whose life seemed to reflect, though dimly, the image of his Lord; or some dear friend who, though gone, has left 'a line of light upon our path of life.' We gladly pass over their failings, and we do not care to note that, perhaps, their virtues all seem to run, as it were, in one groove. This is really only a memory, not a person; it is void of life. But our faith goes out to a Person, a Person who lives now, and in whose life our whole being is centred.

III. Let us look at one more of the wants of the human heart. It is, perhaps, the keenest and most inspiring of all its needs. It is the watchword of the Resurrection, Hope. The subject of hope has always had a charm for the writer and the poet; there is something so essentially human about it. Sometimes, we know, hope acts as a false stimulant, and speaks with but 'a siren tongue.' Still, in the world's common tracks, hope is a blessed and constant force. It brightens and strengthens all that it touches; now inspiring the young mother, as she looks upon her new-born child; now the young man as he resolves to do his devoir, like a brave Christian knight, in the battle of life which is before him; now inspiring the bold heart and experienced head of the older man as he plans and labours to bow before him the opposing forces of the world. Hope lives essentially on the future. But what if that future be destroyed, or if it be bounded by some dark impenetrable wall which even thought cannot pass? Hope bounded by time and sight cannot satisfy man's strange and complicated nature. Faculties he has which cannot belong simply to the present. Thought will on beyond. Memory, imagination, above all love, speak to him with no uncertain voice of some lasting dwelling-place. The chief characteristic of the ancient world was the living for the present. The striking feature in the writings of the more thoughtful was the absence of hope, the deep melancholy which seems to pervade them. The Apostle branded the unconverted Gentiles as men 'having no hope, and without God in the world.' Some of them might speculate on the immortality of the soul, but it was a mere groping in the midst of material darkness.

It was Jesus Christ who gave spiritual life to the first century, and He is the Christ of this nineteenth century of ours. We might well expect some approach to perfection in this long lapse of time. We might well expect that each succeeding age would give a better record of work done for Him. It is not so. There have even been dark times when Christianity seemed doomed, and despair, like that of the ancient world, was settling on men's minds. And yet if the wave has recoiled, the next wave has been higher, and the tide has still flowed on. The renovating power of Christ has brought life out of seeming death. The leaven has been at work. There has been growth as well as life. And the world is more Christian and better than it was. I know there are those who deny this. I know there are those who seem to love to brood over all the evil there is in the earth, and can see neither goodness nor beauty around them. Nature is cruel, pitiless, inexorable. Man is vile, and woman, if possible, is viler still. Society is corrupt to the core, and the gigantic cities of our age are but masses of seething vice. Alas, there is some truth here, but it is not the whole truth. There is sin and misery enough. We cannot shut our eyes to them. But go out on some bright morning at this Resurrection season of the year; or go out and breathe God's fresh air after some time of anxiety or hard work, and see Nature, cruel, if you will, but how beautiful she is, and what a blessing comes to your very soul from all those bright handiworks of God! Go out into any of those cities; and see how much is being done to develop the mind and improve the social status of mankind. See how Christian men, and especially Christian women, are labouring to rescue from pollution some for whom Christ died, to raise up those whom sorrow or sickness has cast down, to make known the blessed Gospel of our Lord—then go home, and try to render the little circle near you happier and better; and I do not doubt you will own it is not such a bad world after all, and that there are signs full of life and of hope, signs of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Only a few days before his death, an American poet, whose works have been much read in this country, finished a poem in these words,—the last lines he ever wrote:

> 'Out of the shadow of night,
> The world moves into light,
> It is daybreak, everywhere.'

Yes, 'daybreak everywhere.' Let us not look down, but up in faith for the glorious sunrise. And if doubt or despondency weigh upon us, if difficulties loom big before us, let us turn for a few moments off life's dusty road, kneel down by the highway side, and think upon the great subject of the Apostle's preaching—'Jesus and the Resurrection.' ARCHDEACON PRESCOTT.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Naturalness of Miracles.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. S. John xx. 18.

I. We are apt to imagine that miracles force conviction by their startling strangeness, by their defiance of all natural conditions and normal experience, but this supreme miracle of the Resurrection convinces by its absolute and harmonious calm, slides in without an effort, without a rupture, without a shock; its presence has that about it which dismisses every form of surprise. Before it had happened it would have seemed to Magdalene, as much as to us, an incredible possibility, but in happening it is explained, it is interpreted, it has justified itself. It took its place for her amid the typical and normal scenery of her life. Earth and sky and sun were all aware of what she saw, and they waited round as friends, conscious, co-operating. There was no change, no violence done to them, they simply moved on in their primæval solidarity to this anticipated completion. It was as natural, as quietly, as sanely natural, as the grass that grew below her feet that He who had been dead should be saying 'Mary,' and that she should be answering 'Rabboni.' And could anything therefore be more free from wonder or from excitement than the record of her ways and of her words? Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken those words to her; just that, no more. The wild weeping has ceased, that extravagance of grief in which she had roamed about like a mother robbed of her child, so possessed by that one relentless thought, repeated over and over, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him,' that she had been blind to the very Master who stood by her side, and she thought it was the gardener. Grief had paralysed her faculties, but now her senses, her speech, and her mind have all recovered control—reason, judgment, experience work once more in orderly fashion, temperate and serene. So plain it is now, so obvious, life is harmonised, it is all consistent again, even as when she walked about in it like a little child confident in its solid integrity, in its smooth irresponsibility. Note how when she first missed the body she had, in her impulsive excitement, run headlong to tell Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' She ran, and they, at the dreadful news, had risen, and ran, ran with all their might, so that the younger man could not even wait for his slower companion. But now there is no more running, no flutter of haste in the narrative,—she would just walk home and tell them what had happened—'Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.'

And the same calm fell upon the troubled band of men as soon as the new experience is made their own. Frightened and startled whilst they fancied it a spirit, let it but prove itself to their senses, and at once the peace which it breathes over them passes over them too. They too, like the Magdalene, gain their composure. How quiet, how sane, the descriptive words, 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

II. Whenever God has taken a novel step in creation, this same quiet security is the note of the change. The new type takes its place in the general order and fabric without the slightest shock or surprise. Nature, the earlier nature, appears to expect it and opens out to its entry with candid ease, far from feeling that a miraculous breach has been driven into its established methods, or that its own consistency is impugned, or its laws challenged, or its evidence cancelled. The very opposite impression is conveyed. The new appearance, unparalleled, unaccounted for as it is, a totally strange arrival, which no combination of existing causes could avail to produce, is nevertheless no stranger when it comes. It finds itself perfectly at home, it corroborates what is already there, it confirms its validity in that it carries it forward to a further stage—a fresh harmony discloses itself, it spreads downwards over the lower areas of existence, drawing everything together into firmer solidity, completing and fulfilling.

So long as we stand outside and below communion with the living God, outside and below the range of the risen Christ, all that we hear from those within sounds strangely incredible.

But Jesus in coming to us explains both Himself and all things else. We go home in possession of the risen life, and it seems nothing strange to quietly say, 'Christ is risen, He is alive,' not more strange for us to say that than for the Magdalene to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. That happy hour of our intercourse with God will pass, and standing off from it, looking back at it from outside, it will again sink away into the incomprehensible. We shall again argue about it as about an odd breach in a plain order of things, yet do not be afraid, do not distrust it. From outside, from the lower level into which you have now lapsed, it must wear that appearance, but it was no idle whisper for all that, no fleeting dream. And why? Why, because of that very coherence with which it endowed our whole life whilst it was happening. If it had been a mere wonderful and extravagant delusion, it would, when it occurred, have stood apart, cut off from the main mass of our experience, meaningless, unrelating, accidental, but that is just what it was not. It combined and co-ordinated and grew together. It possessed the secret of a sane and quiet unity such as we in vain seek after through other means; it fed us, it enriched our common every-day experience, it bred confidence, it calmed alarms, and made us sing again with the brave poet, 'God's in His heaven; all's right with the world.' It is no fruitless and impotent dream, for its memory will renew itself with fresh intensity at that special moment when facts press hardest, and the call upon our resources is most severe. It will recur at hours of great anxiety, at hours when we face the worst, at hours when we stand by open graves, and hear the weary echoes of ancient lamentations, 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' Then it is, at times like that, that we turn home to what is strongest in us, and then it is, at those hours, that we find that the strongest and most durable substance of our lives lies in these moments of which we have spoken, these rare moments in our past, when we have been enabled to say with quiet simplicity, 'He is risen; I have spoken with Him. It is quite true, quite natural, quite certain.'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

Godliness at Home.

So the disciples went away again unto their own home. S. JOHN xx. 10.

THIS is one of the many details given us by S. John, which come to us with all the authority of one who was himself an eye-witness. News kept coming in, and rumours and surmises were reaching the disciples as to the open and empty sepulchre. Peter and John went thither themselves, and, finding it vacant, accepted the fact as proof that something was in progress more than natural, more than human, though they only dimly guessed, hardly even venturing to hope, what that something might be. Then, we are told, at this stage they and the other disciples, despairing of learning anything more, 'returned to their own homes,' and there the door is closed on them, and they disappear from view. What they did there, what tears they shed, what despondency overshadowed them, what they spoke of, what they surmised, what they dared to hope—all this we are not told, we can only in our turn surmise. But this is certain, that they returned to their ordinary duties and human ties after the exciting and terrible events of the past week. And in this way they represent to us our own return to ordinary life, to the dull level of duties after the extreme tension of Lent and Easter. We cannot live always in the presence of the exciting, the marvellous, and the exceptional, or rather we cannot live always in the absorbing companionship of exciting events. We must live, and strive, and learn, and be disciplined by working out what we know in the ordinary unromantic, monotonous things of life. We need, indeed, for our souls' health, as also for our minds and bodies, the stimulus and the tonic virtue of anniversaries, commemorations, of something to look forward to, something to look back upon; we need to remind ourselves of, to be quickened and refreshed by, the memory of the great crises and events in God's government of the world and the revelation of Himself. But these cannot form the staple of human existence, the staple of common life that is to grow steadily. Steady strength, patient, firm faith, must lie in fulfilling ordinary ties, interests, occupations on which the doors are shut, and which are not regarded, just because they are too common, too familiar. The disciples had been long in daily touch with their Lord and Master, feeling their hearts burn within them as they watched with love and pity His Divine anger against sin and meanness and hypocrisy, His profound pity of human sorrow and suffering. Now, for the future, their own lives would have to be lived without this daily interest and stimulus; now, for the first time for nearly three years, some of them would have to discover how far life could be lived without the physical presence, direction, and daily counsel of Him to whom they owed everything that made life worth living. Life without a present Christ was the great, the momentous experiment that lay before them. They had now to test what He could have meant when He said, 'It is expedient that I go away.' They had lived much of that period of three years' companionship in public. He who had no place wherein to lay His head, and was dependent for shelter and hospitality on His disciples, had lived naturally much in public—in the field, in the open air, in the streets, and wherever men most did congregate. And yet, for all that, He had lived much besides in many homes, He had been admitted habitually to share the interests of the family—homes of rejoicing as well as homes of sorrow, marriage feasts as well as dying beds. So peculiarly indeed had He identified Himself with men's social hours, those friendly confidential hours that are connected with the common meal, that His enemies, when pressed for some accusation to bring against Him, were fain to accuse Him of immoderation and sensuality in this respect, and called Him 'a glutton and a wine-bibber.'

I. It was a necessary and surely a blessed incident of the Son of Man, being Himself houseless and homeless, that He was thus constrained to make Himself the guest and trusted friend of other men.

Perhaps we have not remembered how much we owe to this. For here is no philosopher, wise man, or prophet living by himself in mysterious seclusion, and thus explicitly, as it were, declaring himself as

> ' . . . too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food,'

—going about lecturing, etc., after delivering his message, retiring to his own home and shutting the door, leaving his hearers in no certainty that his lesson has any meaning and potency in his own immediate surroundings. In Jesus we have the Teacher habitually—though homeless—illustrating and working out all He had to teach in the amphitheatre in the common home-life, and in the most secret and private incidents of home, its cares, its struggles, and its sorrows. This is why the homeless One was pre-eminently the God of the home, and we cannot overestimate what we owe to this—how every incident of the family has been touched with recollections of Him, and hallowed thereby for those who confess Him as their Master.

II. Yes, it is very wonderful how our conception of Jesus is bound up with this feature of His life. That life is full of the home, and yet the word 'home,' as an abstract idea, in its common associations, is not found in the Greek of the New Testament. The word is in the translation, but it is the rendering of a phrase in which lies no such idea. 'The disciples went away again to themselves,' it is, literally; reminding us of the familiar idiom of the French. So elsewhere, where that much-loved word 'home' occurs, it is the rendering of a term meaning simply 'house,' or else represents a phrase implying merely individual, private, personal interests. We are proud, we English people, and thankful for our word 'home.' The word belongs only, I think, to the Teutonic races, having no exact counterpart in other tongues. And yet it would be rash and uncharitable to infer that, because we only have the word, other people have not the thing, and all that makes that thing dear and lovable and revered. It is most unsafe to conclude, because a nation has only one word for 'house' and 'home,' that therefore the people of that nation are insensible to the vast distinction between the two things, and to the fact that the home is not a building built with hands. It is not the mere presence of some comprehensive name that shows whether the thing exists at all. It is family affection and discipline and association and memory and common joy and sorrow that constitute home. Those are the things that strengthen and knit the contact closer. Where these are, there is home. And it is because the gospel story is full of these things that it is full of home; and in this respect the revelation of God in Jesus Christ stands distinct and altogether a new thing in the history of religion. It is this which invests with a new and fuller meaning even the attractions of One who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows; it is this which interprets the death on Calvary, for this makes of it no mechanical exceptional act, but rather the climax of all the rest of the life that was lived in the hearts and in the homes of men, sympathising with them, living in their closest confidence. This life interprets the death, and the sacred meal appointed to commemorate that death. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper commemorates His final sacrifice, because it renews that life of perpetual communion with men. The Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ is a perpetual reminder that in every common meal, in every joy and happiness, as well as in every sorrow and distress, the living Christ may be, and He will be, unless by our own act we banish Him, an honoured and welcome guest.

III. And, therefore, though there is nothing corresponding to our English home in the words, 'the disciples went away again unto their own home,' there is nothing misleading or false about the phrase. Within those doors which they closed on entry was their home, the very centre of those interests in which their Lord had so often intermeddled, and with which they must now bitterly realise He was to intermeddle no more. Here was the home in the midst of which He was a welcome guest, never again to be seen. And as they sat down to a vacant table and a vacant meal, they for the first time had to realise whether the Presence might yet rule and purify and bless and comfort, although no bodily form, no earthly voice, was there to look and speak. It may not have been absolutely new experience. They may have felt it before. They may have lost those who were near and dear to them, and, though their conceptions thus far of a future existence could not bring them much more comfort than the regulation creed of Martha and Mary, when they said, 'I know that my brother shall rise again at the last day'; still, though they had yet no firm hold of the future, they may have learned something of the power and inspiration of a memory. The figure gone from them in outward shape may have been dwelling still among them, blessing and purifying that household, and hallowing it for evermore. Such is the transfiguring, the subliming power of memory; and something of this would be experienced with the added power of a sinless heart. And it would be the more possible, just for the reason we have been laying stress upon, that the lesson of Jesus, His life and work, His whole relation to men, had been worked out upon the field of family life. There was hardly any incident in that life that He had not touched. He had consecrated it by showing that He was not out of place in it, for so long as it was the abode of loving duty and self denial, He was in the midst of it in the spirit. Jesus Christ is the Consecrator of the home and of the due fulfilment of those home relationships that make home Home.

IV. That quiet recognition of duty, the duty that lies nearest as being at the root of the prosperity of the family, is one of the most touching things by which the Christian truth was destined to prove itself divine. There was no calling men away to perform common duties, merely because they were common, and not religious as distinguished from secular, in that incident which S. John alone describes, where the Master, after His Resurrection appearing again to them, was known by the great draught of fishes. Here men that had passed through the most awful crisis of their lives, who had lost their Lord and Master, and were thrown back on their grief, their despondency and solitude, and the terrible uncertainty of the future—here they were, resuming their ordinary work, supporting those dear to them—not less true to their crucified Master because they were fulfilling the claims of the family—true, indeed, to the kindred points of heaven and home.

May we, after the transcendent events of Lent and Easter, go back each to his own home, and ask ourselves if its standards are such as He would have approved—if its aims, its discipline, its temper, its atmosphere, are marked by His spirit. Whatever we may wish to think to the contrary, it is in the home that character is formed, and future success or failure foreordained. In that comparative privacy is the man made that is to conquer or fail in the vaster battle of life.

CANON AINGER.

The Immortality of the Soul.

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which is spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine. S. Matthew xxii. 31-33.

WE have in these words a direct argument—our Lord's own argument—for the immortality of the soul. I think it is the only argument of the kind that is to be found in the pages either of the New Testament or of the Old. This, of course, invests the passage with a very high and special interest; and this interest is greatly enhanced by the fact, that it is the argument, not of a disciple, but of our Lord Himself.

Let me begin by reminding you, that the passage from the life of Jesus, with which we are now concerned, belongs to the last day of

His public ministry, the Tuesday, as it were, before the first Easter day. Let me remind you also, that this last day of His public ministry was emphatically a day of questions and of conflict; of questions propounded now by one party of bitter enemies and now by another, in the hope of either destroying his popularity or compromising Him with the Roman Government. Amongst these questions was the one which drew from Him this argument for man's immortality. The question was propounded by the Sadducees, the materialists or the secularists of the day: whose faith, or no faith, is described on a memorable occasion in the Acts of the Apostles, by contrast with the Pharisees, thus: 'For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees confess both.' The question was intended to turn into ridicule, and reduce to the absurd, the common orthodox belief of the time in a future state: and as addressed to Pharisees, with their utterly unspiritual conceptions as to the nature of that future state, it would no doubt have its force and its sting. Apparently the question was one which had been tried by the Sadducees upon the Pharisees often before; and with such triumphant success, as to encourage the former to put their famous problem even to Jesus. 'Last of all the woman died also ; therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven ?'

We all know how, in a moment and with a word, Jesus swept the whole web of pitiful Sadducean sophistry away, 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels of God in heaven.' This, however, is not the matter to which I ask your attention now. Having the Sadducees before Him, He would not let them go until He had not only exposed the folly of their question, but had assailed the key of their own position. Without pausing, therefore, He proceeded thus, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'

Before we attempt to analyse the argument and discover where its force lies, two or three matters deserve our attention. We are assured that it produced a great impression at the time upon the bystanders—upon the opponents of the Sadducees—and even upon the Sadducees themselves. For the moment, at any rate, the Sadducees (S. Matthew tells us) were silenced. He pursues the narrative thus: 'But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.' Some scribes, S. Luke says, who were present and heard what passed, could not conceal their satisfaction and their approval. 'Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.' His enemies began to feel that it was not safe to put questions to a disputant of such matchless ability. 'After that they durst not ask Him any questions at all.' Deepest of all, it would seem, and most satisfactory, was the impression produced upon the common people. He was surrounded by a group of hearers when the question of the Sadducees was propounded to Him, and the result on their mind is thus described by S. Matthew: 'When the multitude heard this they were astonished at His doctrine.' A distinguished commentator in a recent work on the Gospel says: 'This answer of our Lord to the Sadducees made a strong, and apparently a lasting, impression upon the Jews. It is substantially adopted, in a treatise on the Resurrection, by Rabbi Madasse ben Israel, quoted by Keim, who says that the passage is very like this, but of late date, and resting certainly upon it.' Putting all these hints and suggestions together, we shall certainly expect to find in the argument of Jesus a vein of thought, at once profound and popular, going to the very root of the matter, yet carefully avoiding the subtleties of philosophy and metaphysics—direct in its aim, and large and truly human in its scope. Of no common kind, surely, could that argument be, which at one and the same moment could command the admiration of scribes and the sympathy of a crowd.

We address ourselves to the study of it with the keenest possible interest, bearing in mind whose the argument is; what its theme is; and how wide and deep the impression which it produced.

I. Applying ourselves to the argument thus, I fancy that our first feeling is not unlikely to be one of some perplexity, and even of disappointment. The argument is so compressed, through the necessities of the Evangelical narrative, that it is by no means easy to seize and firmly grasp the point of it. Were it not for the repetition of it in the Gospels of S. Mark and S. Luke, we should be exceedingly likely to miss its aim. Most happily for us, through the good providence of God and the inspiration of His Spirit, S. Mark and S. Luke have preserved the same striking incident, and have presented it in their pages with just enough of variety, just sufficient shifting of the point of view, to preserve us from mistakes into which it would have been so easy to fall; and to convert the flat plain photograph into the solidity and the reality of the stereoscopic picture.

The argument, we must remember, was addressed to Sadducees; that is, to men, not without education and intelligence, who denied 'the resurrection of the dead,' or, in other words, who denied, 'the immortality of the soul.' For this is, unquestionably, what is really intended; and it is to this denial of immortality that the argument of Jesus is addressed. It is just possible that it might be fancied that the question at issue between the Sadducees and Jesus was, not the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body, meaning by the body, not that of which S. Paul says, 'It is raised a spiritual body,' but this material organism, compacted of flesh and blood, bones and sinews, which we lay decently and reverently in the ground, when the breath of life has gone out of it; and of which the same S. Paul says, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' Let me say, in passing, that neither Jesus Himself, nor His Apostles, have committed the Christian Church to this doctrine of a resurrection of what we rightly call the 'remains' of the departed, as an article of our Christian faith. It is, at the most, a pious opinion, which Christian people may hold, or not hold, as they please. This, however, only in passing. Now, to return to the argument of Jesus; He is addressing the materialists of His day on this great matter of the immortality of the soul; and, in order to convict them of error on this cardinal point, so completely as to reduce them to silence, it was necessary to choose, as 'basis' of the argument, ground common both to Him and to them. Now the Sadducees admitted the authority of the Five Books of Moses; but they refused to recognise the authority of anything, whether written word or oral tradition, outside those Five Books. Their contention was, that the immortality of the soul was not taught in those Five Books: and that, therefore, it was not to be believed by the true followers and disciples of Moses, their great national leader, teacher, and Lawgiver. That, therefore, which would convict them of error, must find its starting-point within those Five Books. And so the argument of Jesus does. No Sadducee would deny that the passage which Jesus proceeded to cite from the third chapter of the Book of Exodus was of divine authority. No Sadducee would cavil at the words with which Jesus introduced the quotation, 'Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?'

II. And what was it? 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Proof of immortality, contained in these words,—where, we naturally ask, is it? It is here, we know: but at what point—lurking under what hidden form? At first we are inclined to suppose that the point lies in the words, 'I am'; 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'; that for God to say this, 'I am,' not 'I was'; but 'I am,' the 'God of Abraham,' centuries after the death of Abraham, implied that Abraham was still living; that he had passed unharmed through death into the life beyond. It is true that, in S. Matthew's Gospel, the 'am' of the 'I am' is expressed, is not, therefore, necessarily unemphatic. It is true also, that the words which follow, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' might seem, at the first glance, to suggest such an interpretation of the argument. But the moment we turn from S. Matthew's Gospel to S. Mark's and S. Luke's, this view of the passage fails us; this explanation of the argument breaks down completely. The 'am' of S. Matthew's 'I am' disappears entirely from S. Mark's version and S. Luke's—from S. Mark's in the original, from S. Luke's both in the original and in our English version of the original. S. Mark has: 'And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' the 'am' of the 'I am' being omitted in the original, as the italics of our English version tell us. S. Luke has: 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' There is no trace at all of the 'I am' here. What is left, as the common ground of the argument, in the narratives of all the three Evangelists alike, is simply the emphatic and (as Jesus teaches us) the most pregnant phrase, 'The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' or, as it stands in the Book of Exodus, 'The God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'

III. The argument of Jesus rests for its force simply upon the phrase, 'God of thy father, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob. That phrase implies a certain relation between these men and God, and that relation implied a certain capacity in man, as man, a capability of communion with God, of prayer to Him, of trust, and love and worship having Him for their object. This capacity, which manifestly and undeniably resides in man—which differentiates him, even at his lowest estate, from the brutes which perish—is (so Jesus argues) a pledge of his immortality. The being, who can cry to God, 'O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee,' has that within him which can defy death—is of such a nature as cannot be conquered by death. Of course the argument would go home with special force to those whose proud boast it was that they were the children of Abraham. But there is nothing in it which can limit its effects to the seed of Abraham, or debar the whole round world of men from the glory of the prospect which is thus opened to them. Every movement of the heart towards God, every aspiration, every prayer, every impulse to good, is thus, in the view of Jesus, a pledge of immortality. Add to this S. Paul's argument, and shall we not be prepared to understand and echo his statement, that our 'Saviour Jesus Christ' hath 'abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel'?

It has been said, and well said, by one of the wisest and subtlest of

English thinkers, 'The one great and binding ground of the belief in God and a hereafter is the law of conscience.' The appeal of Jesus is not so much to 'a law of conscience,' as to something deeper and more fundamental still—the craving of the human spirit for God—the cry of the orphan soul to the Father; that cry which uttered itself in the presence of Jesus on the last evening of His earthly life, by the lips of the disciple, in the words, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' That inner voice, be sure, does not deceive us, when it whispers to the doubting, desponding, troubled soul, that beyond this poor earthly life—sin-stained and sorrow-stricken as it too often is—there is a better and brighter life, to fit ourselves for which is the one all-important thing for us. Even Socrates, standing in the faint twilight of a pagan world upon which the Sun of Righteousness had not yet risen, could believe this, could risk all for this; could plead earnestly with his friends in those last moments of his life to do the same. We have a far better hope than it was possible for him to have, so that his example may well put us to shame. We have the words of Jesus, saying to Mary Magdalene on the first Easter Day, 'Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God.' The dim hope of immortality, which even a Socrates could cherish, is by the life and death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ converted into the assurance of that Father's house, of which He said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.' O weary and sorrowful souls, listen to Him; yea, come to Him; take His yoke upon you and learn of Him and be at rest. Then the future is yours, if not of this life, yet beyond. Then 'all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.

D. J. VAUGHAN.

Low Sunday.

THIS is the octave of the Festival, *Dominica in albis* viz., *in albis depositis* (Ambrosian Missal), because the newly-baptized laid aside their white garments on the eve of this day, the *Clausum Paschæ*, or close of Easter-tide; also, and commonly, 'Low Sunday,' though the reason of the name is doubtful. L'Estrange suggests that, Easter being a high day, its octave was a low day. But one would have thought the very reverse. Another reason given is, that the Easter services were repeated, but in a lower degree; which is manifestly inadequate.

I. 'Peace be unto you' (S. John xx. 21, Gospel).

1. Why did our Lord say this again?

There are various reasons. 'To repeat is to confirm. He gives them peace upon peace, as He promised by the Prophet' (Isaiah xxvi. 3, margin).—Glossa Interlin.

'He offers peace, who had come down for the sake of peace; He repeats it, in order that by His Blood all things might be brought back to peace; those which are in heaven, and those which are on earth' (Glossa Ordinaria).

'Because they had a bitter contest with the Jews, He again announces peace to them to console them, showing them at once the efficacy of His Cross, by which He mitigates all sorrows, and brings all things to good. And this is peace' (S. Chrysostom).

2. 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' The parallel is to be sought, not in the sending, but in the similar power of the Divine Father and the Divine Son. 'With the same power with which the Father sent Me, I send you.' For in this sense He said, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore . . .' (S. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19).

II. Dignity of the Priesthood.—S. Martin, the illustrious Bishop of Tours, being at the Court of the Emperor Maximus, was invited with the priest who accompanied him to dinner at the Emperor's table. The priest was seated in an honourable place, between two counts, and on the same couch; and S. Martin on a low seat near the Emperor. During the meal an officer presented the cup of wine to Maximus, who, wishing to do honour to the holy Bishop, ordered it to be first handed to him, expecting that, when he had tasted, he would return it to him again. To his surprise, however, and that of the whole court, S. Martin, after he had drunk, passed the cup to his companion the priest, as being the most worthy person in the assembly. So far from being displeased, Maximus applauded this action of the saint, acknowledging that, in the sight of God, who estimates things at their true value, earthly dignities are inferior to spiritual.

The priest's life should be one of constant prayer.

S. J. EALES.

The Ability of Jesus.

(*Children's Sermon.*)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. S. MATTHEW xxviii. 18.

AMONG the places of pleasant interest and healthful recreation to which the people of London love to resort on holidays and other occasions, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham holds a very high position. Here, indeed, in summer and winter alike, may be seen day by day, holiday folk of all ages from all parts of the world, wandering leisurely along its grand aisles and light, pleasant galleries; standing by its marble-bordered fish ponds, where the spray from crystal fountains falls upon the broad green leaves or pale flowers of choice water lilies; watching the gold and silver fish as they dart and gleam to and fro in glad play; or lingering by rich beds of gay, fragrant flowers. Now resting under the graceful fronds of the tall evergreen palms and giant tree-ferns from sunny lands far away, and then moving slowly along the costly galleries of beautiful paintings, or looking out from one of the open terraces of the building upon the delightful prospect of park and pond, wooded valley and distant town, and more distant hills, spread in quiet, restful beauty before the eye, the visitor to this temple of pleasure need never weary of its innocent charms. Sometimes, however, other attractions are provided, in connection with one of which an incident occurred that I will use to introduce to you the subject of my sermon.

At various times a lofty scaffolding and platform have been erected in the Palace grounds, from which a rope has been stretched to the building itself; and along this narrow and perilous pathway an American named Blondin has walked, or run, or crept in presence of tens of thousands of spectators. Sometimes a poor Italian has allowed himself, for hire, to be carried by Blondin on his back across the fearful chasm, to the great terror of many of the multitude below.

While visiting some time ago a poor district in London, a city missionary came upon this poor Italian, lying upon his death-bed, and much concerned about the salvation of his soul. At the missionary's request, a Christian gentleman also visited him, and sought to lead him to trust in Jesus, and in Him alone. He says:

'I well remember asking him whether he ever had any fear when he was being carried by Blondin on the tight-rope.

'"No," he said, "he was a very able man."

'"Then you trusted him with your life because you believed he would not let you fall?"

'"Oh, yes," he said, "he would not let me fall."'

And then the missionary tried to show the poor dying man that he must trust Jesus just with the same perfect confidence, and He would carry him safely to heaven.

Let me speak to you of a few forms of the Saviour's divine and unchangeable power.

I. And, first, I would remind you that Jesus is able to save. The meaning of the name Jesus is 'a Saviour,' and there is no child of sin and sorrow whom His tender mercy and grace cannot reach.

During the winter storms of every year how many noble ships are dashed upon the rocks around our shore, or go down beneath the great waves of mid-ocean, with no deliverer at hand, no human power within reach that could help and save. And in other instances, where help is at hand, and brave, self-sacrificing efforts are put forth to save the drowning voyagers, how sad it is to read that again and again the daring efforts failed! Jesus never fails. He is 'able to save to the uttermost.'

Jesus is stronger than the storm. He who walked upon the Sea of Galilee and hushed the tempest by His power is still the same, and will ever answer the cry of storm-distressed souls for help and salvation. Jesus is able to save.

II. Then, secondly, we must not forget that He is also able to keep.

The Apostle Paul said he believed that Christ was able to keep what he had committed to Him unto that day. We suppose S. Paul referred to his heart, which he had given to Jesus. I hope that many of my young readers have also given themselves to the Saviour. If so, how glorious it is to know that He is able to keep what you have given to Him, and that none shall be able to pluck you out of His hand.

III. Then, too, Jesus is able to perform what He has promised.

This is not the case with all our true friends. Some of them, alas, are dead. Jesus never dies. Others of them who were once rich are now poor, and cannot fulfil their promises; but Jesus has riches that will never fail. Others of them are far removed from us, and distance prevents the redemption of their word. But nothing of this kind can hinder Christ. Whatever He has promised He is able to perform. He has, among other things, promised to be our Advocate or Interceding Friend before God. We need such a Friend.

I have read that, far back in the time of ancient Rome, there were two brothers, one of whom was a brave soldier, and had lost both his hands in the battles of his country. The other on one occasion was a criminal, standing before the judge to receive a terrible sentence for a great crime of which he had been found to be guilty. Just as the sentence was about to be pronounced upon the culprit, his brave soldier brother rushed hastily into the court, and, going right up before the judge, held up those wounded and disfigured arms as the best plea he could make for his guilty brother. They seemed to say, 'Spare him for what I have done,' and the story says the guilty one was pardoned for his brother's sake. Jesus, our elder Brother, has undertaken now to appear in the presence of God for us, and we may rejoice that what He has promised He will perform.

ILLUSTRATIONS

IV. Again, Jesus is able to guide.

In Eastern lands the shepherd always goes before the sheep, to lead them in safe paths and to guide them to green pastures. Just so Jesus is our Guide. We may say of Him, 'This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death.'

A Christian's life is sometimes compared to a voyage from earth to heaven. Now you know that it is the duty of the captain of the ship to guide it to the desired haven, and this, if he is able, he will do.

There is a beautiful story told of Captain Basil Hall, of the British navy, which will illustrate this part of our sermon. It is said that he once had to make a voyage from San Blas, a port on the western side of Mexico, to Rio Janeiro, on the eastern side of South America, a distance of eight thousand miles. The ship left, and for nearly three months they were sailing over the trackless deep, never once catching sight of any land from which they might have ascertained their exact position on the great world of waters. One night, having brought his ship to what he believed was only a few miles from the port of Rio, the anchor was cast until the day began to break. Even then he had to proceed very slowly towards the shore, as a thick fog prevented him from seeing where he was going. Slowly the vessel crept on and on, amid the intense anxiety of the crew, until all at once the mist cleared away, and right before them lay the entrance to the harbour. The path of the vessel had only to be altered just one point of the compass to enter the haven; and it is said that so delighted were the sailors with the wonderful ability of their captain that they made the air ring again with their cheers for him. So with perfect safety and unfailing surety shall Jesus our Great Captain guide His own dear people to the haven of eternal rest. R. BREWIN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Faith.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.

FAITH is to sight and reason what the telescope is to the naked eye. By the use of this wondrous instrument, the most distant planets are now made known to us in detail. A map of Mars has been published showing canal-like seas, islands, and large mountains or table-lands covered with snow. Faith brings the distant near, makes the spiritual the most real, and gives us to dwell in heavenly places.

Faith.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.

S. CUTHBERT was once in a snowstorm that drove his boat on the coast of Fife. 'The snow closes the road along the shore,' mourned his comrades: 'the storm bars our way over the sea.' 'There is still the way of heaven that lies open,' said the saint.

Justification by Faith.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.
THANK God that it is not on our own works that we depend for hope as to everlasting bliss. Christ is our all in all, and to Him we can only approach by faith. Now it is on this doctrine of justification by faith alone that I delight to dwell when I am inclined to despond: I then throw mvself without reserve at the feet of Christ.

Overcoming the World.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.
HE that has set his heart upon the world is not in a capacity of understanding the Gospel.

The World.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.
WHEN Crates threw his gold into the sea, he cried out, 'I will destroy you, lest you should destroy me.' Thus, if the world be not put to death here, it will put us to death hereafter.

The World.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.
THE pleasure of the world is like that Colchian honey, whereof Xenophon's soldiers no sooner tasted than they were miserably distempered; those that took little were drunk; those that took more were mad; those that took most were dead. Thus are we, either intoxicated, or infatuated, or killed outright with this deceitful world.

The World.
1 S. JOHN v. 4.
CHARON, in Lucian (as he feigns) was conducted by Mercury to such a place where he might see all the world at once. After he had sufficiently viewed and looked about, Mercury would know what he had observed. He told him that he saw a vast multitude and a promiscuous, their habitations like molehills, the men as emmets; he could discern cities like so many hives of bees, wherein every bee had a sting, and they did nought else but sting one another, some domineering like hornets, bigger than the rest, some like filching wasps, others as drones. Over their heads were hovering a confused company of perturbations, hopes, fears, anger, avarice, ignorance, etc., and a multitude of diseases hanging, which they still pulled on their pates. Some were brawling, some fighting, riding, running, *solicite ambientes*, *callide litigantes*, for toys, and trifles, and such momentary things: their towns and provinces mere factions, rich against poor, poor against rich, nobles against artificers, they against nobles, and so the rest. In conclusion, he condemned them all for madmen, etc. 'O fools! O madmen!' he exclaims. 'Mad endeavours! mad actions! mad! mad! mad!'

The World. 1 S. John v. 4. Set not your heart upon the world, since God hath not made it your portion; for it will not fall to you to get two portions, and to laugh twice, and to be happy twice, and to have an upper heaven and an under heaven too. Christ our Lord and His saints were not so; and therefore let go your grip of this life and of the good things of it. I hope your heaven groweth not here.

1 S. John ii. 16. All that is in the world is either 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life' (1 S. John ii. 16). *Libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi.* Miserable is that accursed earth, which these three rivers of fire burn rather than refresh.

Dangers of the World. 1 S. John ii. 16. Believers are in danger of seduction into the sin and falsehood of the world. The world threatens believers not only with its enmity, but evermore with its temptation. Believers must be warned to shun the idols the world worships, and they are warned against love to the world, because love in that way very easily gets associated with sinful lusts, which are common in the world. In false prophecy it is shown that the devil, who was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, threatens the Church, not only with the deadly enmity of the world, but also with its soul-destroying lies. We cannot show brotherly love to false teachers without running the risk of making ourselves partakers in their sins.

The Greatest Mission. The most solemn mission week which the world saw was the week of our Lord's Passion.

1 S. John xx. 21. He passed Saturday night at Bethany; the next day everything looked bright. It was Palm Sunday, and He rode into Jerusalem. He wrought a great miracle at Bethany, by raising Lazarus from the dead, and the people knew it, and met Him with acclamation. They took branches of palm, emblems of victory and triumph, and strewed them in the way before Him, as a mighty conqueror. They spread their garments in His path, as if ready to lay all at the feet of Christ. . . . They cried 'Hosanna,' etc. But He, the object of all this, knew that there was a cloud in the horizon, the sunshine would fade, and the heavens be covered with gloom. . . . He saw beyond that ephemeral triumph; and when He came near the city He wept over it; and why? Because it knew not the day of its visitation. 'O Jerusalem,' etc. etc. . . .

There was scarcely ever a time when there was more of what the world would call religious demonstration than during that mission week. There were 2,000,000 of people in the city, crowds of worshippers in the synagogues and in the temple, who joined in the hosannas to Christ. . . . But on Monday morning of the mission-week, on returning to Jerusalem, our Lord saw a fig-tree on the way. It had a luxuriant exuberance of leaves; but Christ wanted fruit—for that He craved. . . . He therefore blighted the leafy, unfruitful tree, and doomed it to perpetual barrenness. Here was a figure of Jerusalem itself. He went from the fig-tree to the temple, then thronged with worshippers (typified by the barren, leafy fig-tree), and said, 'My house . . . thieves . . . ?' And what next? The same people who had gone to meet Him, coming from Bethany on Sunday, who seemed zealous for God's glory at the Passover, shouted 'Hosannas,' that very same people shouted no less vociferously on the Friday following, 'Crucify Him, Crucify Him!' That mission was not successful, although it was the greatest mission held by the greatest missioner who ever preached to the world.

Learn from this:

There may be large and enthusiastic congregations, eloquent preaching, fervent spiritual excitement in 'after-meetings'; but all may be only like the foliage of the fig-tree on the wayside, to be withered by the breath of Christ. It may begin with 'Hosanna, and end with 'Crucify Him.'

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to His Majesty
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